RELIGION: A DIALOGUE

And Other Essays

BY

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Vitam impendere vero.—JUVENAL

SELECTED AND TRANSLATED

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NOTE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

As a third edition of this little volume is called for, I have taken the opportunity of adding two more Essays: the brief dialogue on *The Failure of Philosophy*, and some observations on *The Metaphysics of Fine Art*. The latter Essay is a rendering of such portions of a chapter in the original, entitled *Zur Metaphysik des Schönen*, as appear to be generally interesting and easily intelligible. The chief statement of Schopenhauer's view of Art is to be found in his large work; but as he gives a short essay in his *Parerga*, I have thought it well to include it in this selection.

The Prefatory Note to be found in the first and second editions of this volume is here omitted. It is now incorporated with the main Preface to the series in *The Wisdom of Life*.

T. B. S.

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RELIGION:

A DIALOGUE.

Demopheles Between ourselves, my dear fellow, I don't care about the way you sometimes have of exhibiting your talent for philosophy; you make religion a subject for sarcastic remarks, and even for open ridicule. Everyone thinks his religion sacred, and therefore you ought to respect it.

Philalethes. That doesn't follow! I don't see why, because other people are simpletons, I should have any regard for a pack of lies. I respect truth everywhere, and so I can't respect what is opposed to it. My maxim is *Vigeat veritas et pereat mundus,* like the lawyers' *Fiat justitia et pereat mundus.* Every profession ought to have an analogous device.

Demopheles. Then I suppose doctors should say *Fiant pilulae et pereat mundus,*—there wouldn't be much difficulty about that!

Philalethes. Heaven forbid! You must take everything *cum grano salis.* (with a grain of salt — i.e. with some allowance

Demopheles. Exactly; that's why I want you to take religion *cum grano salis.* I want you to see that

you must meet the requirements of the people according to the measure of their comprehension. Where you have masses of people, of crude susceptibilities and clumsy intelligence, sordid in their pursuits and sunk in drudgery, religion provides the only means of proclaiming and making them feel the high import of life. For the average man takes an interest, primarily, in nothing but what will satisfy his physical needs and hankerings, and beyond this, give him a little amusement and pastime. Founders of religion and philosophers come into the world to rouse him from his stupor and point to the lofty meaning of existence; philosophers for the few, the emancipated, founders of religion for the many, for humanity at large. For, as your friend Plato has said, the multitude can't be philosophers, and you shouldn't forget that. Religion is the metaphysics of the masses; by all means let them keep it: let it therefore command external respect, for to discredit it is to take it away. Just as they have popular poetry, and the popular wisdom of proverbs, so they must have popular metaphysics too: for mankind absolutely needs *an interpretation of life;* and this, again, must be suited to popular comprehension. Consequently, this interpretation is always an allegorical investiture of the truth: and in practical life and in its effects on the feelings, that is to say, as a rule of action and as a comfort and consolation in suffering and death, it accomplishes perhaps just as much as the truth itself could achieve if we possessed it. Don't take offence at its unkempt, grotesque and apparently absurd form; for with your education and learning, you have no idea of the round-

about ways by which people in their crude state have to receive their knowledge of deep truths. The various religions are only various forms in which the truth, which taken by itself is above their comprehension, is grasped and realised by the masses; and truth becomes inseparable from these forms. Therefore, my dear sir, don't take it amiss if I say that to make a mockery of these forms is both shallow and unjust.

Philalethes. But isn't it every bit as shallow and unjust to demand that there shall be no other system of metaphysics but this one, cut out as it is to suit the requirements and comprehension of the masses? that its doctrines shall be the limit of human speculation, the standard of all thought, so that the metaphysics of the few, the emancipated, as you call them, must be devoted only to confirming, strengthening, and explaining the metaphysics of the masses? that the highest powers of human intelligence shall remain unused and undeveloped, even be nipped in the bud, in order that their activity may not thwart the popular metaphysics? And isn't this just the very claim which religion sets up? Isn't it a little too much to have tolerance and delicate forbearance preached by what is intolerance and cruelty itself? Think of the heretical tribunals, inquisitions, religious wars, crusades, Socrates' cup of poison, Bruno's and Vanini's death in the flames! Is all this to-day quite a thing of the past? How can genuine philosophical effort, sincere search after truth, the noblest calling of the noblest men, be let and hindered more completely than by a conventional system of metaphysics enjoy-

ing a State monopoly, the principles of which are impressed into every head in earliest youth so earnestly, so deeply, and so firmly, that, unless the mind is miraculously elastic, they remain indelible. In this way the groundwork of all healthy reason is once for all deranged; that is to say, the capacity for original thought and unbiased judgment, which is weak enough in itself, is, in regard to those subjects to which it might be applied, for ever paralysed and ruined.

Demopheles. Which means, I suppose, that people have arrived at a conviction which they won't give up in order to embrace yours instead.

Philalethes. Ah! if it were only a conviction based on insight. Then one could bring arguments to bear, and the battle would be fought with equal weapons. But religions admittedly appeal, not to conviction as the result of argument, but to belief as demanded by revelation. And as the capacity for believing is strongest in childhood, special care is taken to make sure of this tender age. This has much more to do with the doctrines of belief taking root than threats and reports of miracles. If, in early childhood, certain fundamental views and doctrines are paraded with unusual solemnity, and an air of the greatest earnestness never before visible in anything else; if, at the same time, the possibility of a doubt about them be completely passed over, or touched upon only to indicate that doubt is the first step to eternal perdition, the resulting impression will be so deep that, as a rule, that is, in almost every case, doubt about them will be almost as impossible as doubt about one's own

existence. Hardly one in ten thousand will have the strength of mind to ask himself seriously and earnestly—is that true? To call such as can do it strong minds, *esprits forts,* is a description apter than is generally supposed. But for the ordinary mind there is nothing so absurd or revolting but what, if inculcated in that way, the strongest belief in it will strike root. If, for example, the killing of a heretic or infidel were essential to the future salvation of his soul, almost everyone would make it the chief event of his life, and in dying would draw consolation and strength from the remembrance that he had succeeded. As a matter of fact, almost every Spaniard in days gone by used to look upon an *auto da fè* as the most pious of all acts and one most agreeable to God. A parallel to this may be found in the way in which the Thugs (a religious sect in India, suppressed a short time ago by the English, who executed numbers of them) express their sense of religion and their veneration for the goddess Kali; they take every opportunity of murdering their friends and travelling companions, with the object of getting possession of their goods, and in the serious conviction that they are thereby doing a praiseworthy action, conducive to their eternal welfare.* The power of religious dogma, when inculcated early, is such as to stifle conscience, compassion and finally every feeling of humanity. But if you want to see with your own eyes and close at hand what timely inoculation of belief will accomplish, look at the English. Here is a nation favoured

* Cf. Illustrations of the history and practice of the Thugs, London, 1837; also the *Edinburgh Review,* Oct.-Jan., 1836-7.

before all others by nature; endowed, more than all others, with discernment, intelligence, power of judgment, strength of character; look at them, abased and made ridiculous, beyond all others, by their stupid ecclesiastical superstition, which appears amongst their other abilities like a fixed idea or monomania. For this they have to thank the circumstance that education is in the hands of the clergy, whose endeavour it is to impress all the articles of belief, at the earliest age, in a way that amounts to a kind of paralysis of the brain; this in its turn expresses itself all their life in an idiotic bigotry, which makes otherwise most sensible and intelligent people amongst them degrade themselves so that one can't make head or tail of them. If you consider how essential to such a masterpiece is inoculation in the tender age of childhood, the missionary system appears no longer only as the acme of human importunity, arrogance and impertinence, but also as an absurdity, if it doesn't confine itself to nations which are still in their infancy, like Caffirs, Hottentots, South Sea Islanders, etc. Amongst these races it is successful; but in India the Brahmans treat the discourses of the missionaries with contemptuous smiles of approbation, or simply shrug their shoulders. And one may say generally that the proselytising efforts of the missionaries in India, in spite of the most advantageous facilities, are, as a rule, a failure. An authentic report in Vol. XXI. of the Asiatic Journal (1826) states that after so many years of missionary activity not more than three hundred living converts were to be found in the whole of India, where the population of the

English possessions alone comes to one hundred and fifteen millions; and at the same time it is admitted that the Christian converts are distinguished for their extreme immorality. Three hundred venal and bribed souls out of so many millions! There is no evidence that things have gone better with Christianity in India since then, in spite of the fact that the missionaries are now trying, contrary to stipulation and in schools exclusively designed for secular English instruction, to work upon the children's minds as they please, in order to smuggle in Christianity; against which the Hindoos are most jealously on their guard. As I have said, childhood is the time to sow the seeds of belief, and not manhood; more especially where an earlier faith has taken root. An acquired conviction such as is feigned by adults is, as a rule, only the mask for some kind of personal interest. And it is the feeling that this is almost bound to be the case which makes a man who has changed his religion in mature years an object of contempt to most people everywhere; who thus show that they look upon religion, not as a matter of reasoned conviction, but merely as a belief inoculated in childhood, before any test can be applied. And that they are right in their view of religion is also obvious from the way in which not only the masses, who are blindly credulous, but also the clergy of every religion, who, as such, have faithfully and zealously studied its sources, foundations, dogmas and disputed points, cleave as a body to the religion of their particular country; consequently for a minister of one religion or confession to go over to another is the rarest thing in the world.

The Catholic clergy, for example, are fully convinced of the truth of all the tenets of their Church, and so are the Protestant clergy of theirs, and both defend the principles of their creeds with like zeal. And yet the conviction is governed merely by the country native to each; to the South German ecclesiastic the truth of the Catholic dogma is quite obvious, to the North German, the Protestant. If, then, these convictions are based on objective reasons, the reasons must be climatic, and thrive, like plants, some only here, some only there. The convictions of those who are thus locally convinced are taken on trust and believed by the masses everywhere.

Demopheles. Well, no harm is done, and it doesn't make any real difference. As a fact, Protestantism is more suited to the north, Catholicism to the south.

Philalethes. So it seems. Still I take a higher standpoint, and keep in view a more important object, the progress, namely, of the knowledge of truth among mankind. And from this point of view, it is a terrible thing that, wherever a man is born, certain propositions are inculcated in him in earliest youth, and he is assured that he may never have any doubts about them, under penalty of thereby forfeiting eternal salvation; propositions, I mean, which affect the foundation of all our other knowledge and accordingly determine for ever, and, if they are false, distort for ever, the point of view from which our knowledge starts; and as, further, the corollaries of these propositions touch the entire system of our intellectual attainments at every point, the whole of human knowledge is thoroughly adulterated by them.

Evidence of this is afforded by every literature; the most striking by that of the Middle Age, but in a too considerable degree by that of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Look at even the first minds of all those epochs; how paralysed they are by false fundamental positions like these; how, more especially, all insight into the true constitution and working of Nature is, as it were, blocked up. During the whole of the Christian period Theism presents a solid barrier to all intellectual effort, and chiefly to philosophy, arresting or stunting all progress. For the scientific men of these ages God, devil, angels, demons hid the whole of nature; no enquiry was followed to the end, nothing ever thoroughly examined; everything which went beyond the most obvious causal nexus was immediately set down to those personalities. "*It was at once explained by a reference to God, angels or demons,*" as Pomponatius expressed himself when the matter was being discussed, "*and philosophers at any rate have nothing analogous.*" There is, to be sure, a suspicion of irony in this statement of Pomponatius, as his perfidy in other matters is known; still, he is only giving expression to the general way of thinking of his age. And if, on the other hand, any one possessed the rare quality of an elastic mind, which alone could burst the bonds, his writings and he himself with them were burnt; as happened to Bruno and Vanini. How completely an ordinary mind is paralysed by that early preparation in metaphysics is seen in the most vivid way and on its most ridiculous side, whenever it undertakes to criticise the doctrines of an alien creed,

See for instance Dean Church's Sermon on the Vedas

The efforts of the ordinary man are generally found to be directed to a careful exhibition of the incongruity of its dogmas with those of his own belief: he is at great pains to show that not only do they not say, but certainly do not mean, the same thing; and with that he thinks, in his simplicity, that he has demonstrated the falsehood of the alien creed. He really never dreams of putting the question which of the two may be right; his own articles of belief he looks upon as *à priori* true and certain principles.

Demopheles. So that's your higher point of view! I assure you there is a higher still. *First live, then philosophise* is a maxim of more comprehensive import than appears at first sight. The first thing to do is to control the raw and evil dispositions of the masses, so as to keep them from pushing injustice to extremes, and from committing cruel, violent and disgraceful acts. If you were to wait until they had recognised and grasped the truth, you would undoubtedly come too late; and truth, supposing that it had been found, would surpass their powers of comprehension. In any case an allegorical investiture of it, a parable or myth, is all that would be of any service to them. As Kant said, there must be a public standard of Right and Virtue; it must always flutter high overhead. It is a matter of indifference what heraldic figures are inscribed on it, so long as they signify what is meant. Such an allegorical representation of truth is always and everywhere, for humanity at large, a serviceable substitute for a truth to which it can never attain, for a philosophy which it can never grasp; let alone the fact that it is daily chang-

ing its shape, and has in no form as yet met with general acceptance. Practical aims, then, my good Philalethes, are in every respect superior to theoretical.

Philalethes. What you say is very like the ancient advice of Timæus of Locrus, the Pythagorean, *stop the mind with falsehood if you can't speed it with truth.* I almost suspect that your plan is the one which is so much in vogue just now, that you want to impress upon us that

> The hour is nigh
> When we may feast in quiet.

You recommend us, in fact, to take timely precautions, so that the waves of the discontented raging masses mayn't disturb us at table. But the whole point of view is as false as it is now-a-days popular and commended; and so I make haste to enter a protest against it. It is *false* that state, justice, law cannot be upheld without the assistance of religion and its dogmas; and that justice and public order need religion as a necessary complement, if legislative enactments are to be carried out. It is *false*, were it repeated a hundred times! An effective and striking argument to the contrary is afforded by the ancients, especially the Greeks. They had nothing at all of what we understand by religion. They had no sacred documents, no dogma to be learned and its acceptance furthered by everyone, its principles to be inculcated early on the young. Just as little was moral doctrine preached by the ministers of religion, nor did the priests trouble themselves about morality or about

what the people did or left undone. Not at all. The duty of the priests was confined to temple-ceremonial, prayers, hymns, sacrifices, processions, lustrations and the like, the object of which was anything but the moral improvement of the individual. What was called religion consisted, more especially in the cities, in giving temples here and there to some of the gods of the greater tribes, in which the worship described was carried on as a state matter, and was consequently, in fact, an affair of police. No one, except the functionaries performing, was in any way compelled to attend, or even to believe in it. In the whole of antiquity there is no trace of any obligation to believe in any particular dogma. Merely in the case of an open denial of the existence of the gods, or any other reviling of them, a penalty was imposed, and that on account of the insult offered to the state, which served those gods: beyond this it was free to everyone to think of them what he pleased. If anyone wanted to gain the favour of those gods privately, by prayer or sacrifice, it was open to him to do so at his own expense and at his own risk; if he didn't do it, no one made any objection, least of all the state. In the case of the Romans everyone had his own Lares and Penates at home; these were, however, in reality, only the venerated busts of ancestors. Of the immortality of the soul and a life beyond the grave, the ancients had no firm, clear or, least of all, dogmatically fixed idea, but very loose, fluctuating, indefinite and problematical notions, everyone in his own way: and the ideas about the gods were just as varying, individual and vague. There was therefore

really no *religion*, in our sense of the word, amongst the ancients. But did anarchy and lawlessness prevail amongst them on that account? Is not law and civil order, rather, so much their work, that it still forms the foundation of our own? Was there not complete protection for property, even though it consisted for the most part of slaves? And did not this state of things last for more than a thousand years? So that I can't recognise, I must even protest against the practical aims and the necessity of religion in the sense indicated by you, and so popular now-a-days, that is, as an indispensable foundation of all legislative arrangements. For, if you take that point of view, the pure and sacred endeavour after truth will, to say the least, appear quixotic, and even criminal, if it ventures, in its feeling of justice, to denounce the authoritative creed as a usurper who has taken possession of the throne of truth and maintained his position by keeping up the deception.

Demopheles. But religion is not opposed to truth; it itself teaches truth. And as the range of its activity is not a narrow lecture room, but the world and humanity at large, religion must conform to the requirements and comprehension of an audience so numerous and so mixed. Religion must not let truth appear in its naked form; or, to use a medical simile, it must not exhibit it pure, but must employ a mythical vehicle, a medium, as it were. You can also compare truth in this respect to certain chemical stuffs which in themselves are gaseous, but which for medicinal uses, as also for preservation or transmission, must be bound to a stable, solid base, because

they would otherwise volatilise. Chlorine gas, for example, is for all purposes applied only in the form of chlorides. But if truth, pure, abstract and free from all mythical alloy, is always to remain unattainable, even by philosophers, it might be compared to fluorine, which cannot even be isolated, but must always appear in combination with other elements. Or, to take a less scientific simile, truth, which is inexpressible except by means of myth and allegory, is like water, which can be carried about only in vessels; a philosopher who insists on obtaining it pure is like a man who breaks the jug in order to get the water by itself. This is, perhaps, an exact analogy. At any rate, religion is truth allegorically and mythically expressed, and so rendered attainable and digestible by mankind in general. Mankind couldn't possibly take it pure and unmixed, just as we can't breathe pure oxygen; we require an addition of four times its bulk in nitrogen. In plain language, the profound meaning, the high aim of life, can only be unfolded and presented to the masses symbolically, because they are incapable of grasping it in its true signification. Philosophy, on the other hand, should be like the Eleusinian mysteries, for the few, the *élite.*

Philalethes. I understand. It comes, in short, to truth wearing the garment of falsehood. But in doing so it enters on a fatal alliance. What a dangerous weapon is put into the hands of those who are authorised to employ falsehood as the vehicle of truth! If it is as you say, I fear the damage caused by the falsehood will be greater than any advantage the truth could ever produce. Of course, if the allegory

were admitted to be such, I should raise no objection; but with the admission it would rob itself of all respect, and consequently, of all utility. The allegory must, therefore, put in a claim to be true in the proper sense of the word, and maintain the claim; while, at the most, it is true only in an allegorical sense. Here lies the irreparable mischief, the permanent evil; and this is why religion has always been and will always be in conflict with the noble endeavour after pure truth.

Demopheles. Oh no! that danger is guarded against. If religion mayn't exactly confess its allegorical nature, it gives sufficient indication of it.

Philalethes. How so?

Demopheles. In its mysteries. "Mystery," is in reality only a technical theological term for religious allegory. All religions have their mysteries. Properly speaking, a mystery is a dogma which is plainly absurd, but which, nevertheless, conceals in itself a lofty truth, and one which by itself would be completely incomprehensible to the ordinary understanding of the raw multitude. The multitude accepts it in this disguise on trust, and believes it, without being led astray by the absurdity of it, which even to its intelligence is obvious; and in this way it participates in the kernel of the matter so far as it is possible for it to do so. To explain what I mean, I may add that even in philosophy an attempt has been made to make use of a mystery. Pascal, for example, who was at once a pietist, a mathematician, and a philosopher, says in this threefold capacity: *God is everywhere centre and nowhere periphery.* Malebranche

has also the just remark: *Liberty is a mystery.* One could go a step further and maintain that in religions everything is mystery. For to impart truth, in the proper sense of the word, to the multitude in its raw state is absolutely impossible; all that can fall to its lot is to be enlightened by a mythological reflection of it. Naked truth is out of place before the eyes of the profane vulgar; it can only make its appearance thickly veiled. Hence, it is unreasonable to require of a religion that it shall be true in the proper sense of the word; and this, I may observe in passing, is now-a-days the absurd contention of Rationalists and Supernaturalists alike. Both start from the position that religion must be the real truth; and while the former demonstrate that it is not the truth, the latter obstinately maintain that it is; or rather, the former dress up and arrange the allegorical element in such a way, that, in the proper sense of the word, it could be true, but would be, in that case, a platitude; while the latter wish to maintain that it is true in the proper sense of the word, without any further dressing; a belief, which, as we ought to know, is only to be enforced by inquisitions and the stake. As a fact, however, myth and allegory really form the proper element of religion; and under this indispensable condition, which is imposed by the intellectual limitation of the multitude, religion provides a sufficient satisfaction for those metaphysical requirements of mankind which are indestructible. It takes the place of that pure philosophical truth which is infinitely difficult and perhaps never attainable.

Philalethes. Ah! just as a wooden leg takes the

place of a natural one; it supplies what is lacking, barely does duty for it, claims to be regarded as a natural leg, and is more or less artfully put together. The only difference is that, whilst a natural leg as a rule preceded the wooden one, religion has everywhere got the start of philosophy.

Demopheles. That may be, but still for a man who hasn't a natural leg, a wooden one is of great service. You must bear in mind that the metaphysical needs of mankind absolutely require satisfaction, because the horizon of man's thoughts must have a background and not remain unbounded. Man has, as a rule, no faculty for weighing reasons and discriminating between what is false and what is true; and besides, the labour which nature and the needs of nature impose upon him, leaves him no time for such inquiries, or for the education which they presuppose. In his case, therefore, it is no use talking of a reasoned conviction; he has to fall back on belief and authority. If a really true philosophy were to take the place of religion, nine-tenths at least of mankind would have to receive it on authority; that is to say, it too would be a matter of faith, for Plato's dictum, that the multitude can't be philosophers, will always remain true. Authority, however, is an affair of time and circumstance alone, and so it can't be bestowed on that which has only reason in its favour; it must accordingly be allowed to nothing but what has acquired it in the course of history, even if it is only an allegorical representation of truth. Truth in this form, supported by authority, appeals first of all to those elements in the human constitution which are strictly

metaphysical, that is to say, to the need man feels of a theory in regard to the riddle of existence which forces itself upon his notice, a need arising from the consciousness that behind the physical in the world there is a metaphysical, something permanent as the foundation of constant change. Then it appeals to the will, to the fears and hopes of mortal beings living in constant struggle; for whom, accordingly, religion creates gods and demons whom they can cry to, appease and win over. Finally, it appeals to that moral consciousness which is undeniably present in man, lends to it that corroboration and support without which it would not easily maintain itself in the struggle against so many temptations. It is just from this side that religion affords an inexhaustible source of consolation and comfort in the innumerable trials of life, a comfort which does not leave men in death, but rather then only unfolds its full efficacy. So religion may be compared to one who takes a blind man by the hand and leads him, because he is unable to see for himself, whose concern it is to reach his destination, not to look at everything by the way.

Philalethes. That is certainly the strong point of religion. If it is a fraud, it is a pious fraud; that is undeniable. But this makes priests something between deceivers and teachers of morality: they daren't teach the real truth, as you have quite rightly explained, even if they knew it, which is not the case. A true philosophy, then, can always exist, but not a true religion; true, I mean, in the proper understanding of the word, not merely in that flowery or allegorical

sense which you have described; a sense in which all religions would be true, only in various degrees. It is quite in keeping with the inextricable mixture of weal and woe, honesty and deceit, good and evil, nobility and baseness, which is the average characteristic of the world everywhere, that the most important, the most lofty, the most sacred truths can make their appearance only in combination with a lie, can even borrow strength from a lie as from something that works more powerfully on mankind; and, as revelation, must be ushered in by a lie. This might indeed be regarded as the *cachet* of the moral world. However, we won't give up the hope that mankind will eventually reach a point of maturity and education at which it can on the one side produce, and on the other receive, the true philosophy. *Simplex sigillum veri*: the naked truth must be so simple and intelligible that it can be imparted to all in its true form, without any admixture of myth and fable, without disguising it in the form of *religion*.

Demopheles. You've no notion how stupid most people are.

Philalethes. I am only expressing a hope which I can't give up. If it were fulfilled, truth in its simple and intelligible form would of course drive religion from the place it has so long occupied as its representative, and by that very means kept open for it. The time would have come when religion would have carried out her object and completed her course: the race she had brought to years of discretion she could dismiss, and herself depart in peace: that would be the *euthanasia* of religion. But as long as she lives,

she has two faces, one of truth, one of fraud. According as you look at one or the other, you will bear her favour or ill-will. Religion must be regarded as a necessary evil, its necessity resting on the pitiful imbecility of the great majority of mankind, incapable of grasping the truth, and therefore requiring, in its pressing need, something to take its place.

Demopheles. Really, one would think that you philosophers had truth in a cupboard, and that all you had to do was to go and get it!

Philalethes. Well, if we haven't got it, it is chiefly owing to the pressure put upon philosophy by religion at all times and in all places. People have tried to make the expression and communication of truth, even the contemplation and discovery of it, impossible, by putting children, in their earliest years, into the hands of priests to be manipulated; to have the lines in which their fundamental thoughts are henceforth to run, laid down with such firmness as, in essential matters, to be fixed and determined for this whole life. When I take up the writings even of the best intellects of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, (more especially if I have been engaged in Oriental studies), I am sometimes shocked to see how they are paralysed and hemmed in on all sides by Jewish ideas. How can anyone think out the true philosophy when he is prepared like this?

Demopheles. Even if the true philosophy were to be discovered, religion wouldn't disappear from the world, as you seem to think. There can't be one system of metaphysics for everybody; that's rendered impossible by the natural differences of intellectual

power between man and man, and the differences, too, which education makes. It is a necessity for the great majority of mankind to engage in that severe bodily labour which cannot be dispensed with if the ceaseless requirements of the whole race are to be satisfied. Not only does this leave the majority no time for education, for learning, for contemplation; but by virtue of the hard and fast antagonism between muscles and mind, the intelligence is blunted by so much exhausting bodily labour, and becomes heavy, clumsy, awkward and consequently incapable of grasping any other than quite simple situations. At least nine-tenths of the human race falls under this category. But still people require a system of metaphysics, that is, an account of the world and our existence, because such an account belongs to the most natural needs of mankind, they require a popular system; and to be popular it must combine many rare qualities. It must be easily understood, and at the same time possess, on the proper points, a certain amount of obscurity, even of impenetrability; then a correct and satisfactory system of morality must be bound up with its dogmas; above all, it must afford inexhaustible consolation in suffering and death; the consequence of all this is, that it can only be true in an allegorical and not in a real sense. Further, it must have the support of an authority which is impressive by its great age, by being universally recognised, by its documents, their tone and utterances; qualities which are so extremely difficult to combine that many a man wouldn't be so ready, if he considered the matter, to help to undermine a religion,

an opinion on religion, you should always bear in mind the character of the great multitude for which it is destined, and form a picture to yourself of its complete inferiority, moral and intellectual. It is incredible how far this inferiority goes, and how perseveringly a spark of truth will glimmer on even under the crudest covering of monstrous fable or grotesque ceremony, clinging indestructibly, like the odour of musk, to everything that has once come into contact with it. In illustration of this, consider the profound wisdom of the Upanishads, and then look at the mad idolatry in the India of to-day, with its pilgrimages, processions and festivities, or at the insane and ridiculous goings-on of the Saniassi. Still one can't deny that in all this insanity and nonsense there lies some ~~obscure~~ purpose which accords with, or is a reflection of, the profound wisdom I mentioned. But for the brute multitude, it has to be dressed up in this form. In such a contrast as this we have the two poles of humanity, the wisdom of the individual and the bestiality of the many, both of which find their point of contact in the moral sphere. That saying from the Kurral must occur to everybody, *Base people look like men, but I have never seen their exact counterpart.* The man of education may, all the same, interpret religion to himself *cum grano salis;* the man of learning, the contemplative spirit may secretly exchange it for a philosophy. But here again one philosophy wouldn't suit everybody; by the laws of affinity every system would draw to itself

physical system of the schools for the educated multitude, and a higher one for the *élite*. Kant's lofty doctrine, for instance, had to be degraded to the level of the schools and ruined by such men as Fries, Krug and Salat. In short, here, if anywhere, Goethe's maxim is true, *One does not suit all.* Pure faith in revelation and pure metaphysics are for the two extremes, and for the intermediate steps mutual modifications of both in innumerable combinations and gradations. And this is rendered necessary by the immeasurable differences which nature and education have placed between man and man.

Philalethes. The view you take reminds me seriously of the mysteries of the ancients, which you mentioned just now. Their fundamental purpose seems to have been to remedy the evil arising from the differences of intellectual capacity and education. The plan was, out of the great multitude utterly impervious to unveiled truth, to select certain persons who might have it revealed to them up to a given point; out of these, again, to choose others to whom more would be revealed, as being able to grasp more; and so on up to the Epopts. These grades corresponded to the little, greater and greatest mysteries. The arrangement was founded on a correct estimate of the intellectual inequality of mankind.

Demopheles. To some extent the education in our lower, middle and high schools corresponds to the varying grades of initiation into the mysteries.

Philalethes. In a very approximate way; and then

only in so far as subjects of higher knowledge are written about exclusively in Latin. But since that has ceased to be the case, all the mysteries are profaned.

Demopheles. However that may be, I wanted to remind you that you should look at religion more from the practical than from the theoretical side. *Personified* metaphysics may be the enemy of religion, but all the same *personified* morality will be its friend. Perhaps the metaphysical element in all religions is false; but the moral element in all is true. This might perhaps be presumed from the fact that they all disagree in their metaphysics, but are in accord as regards morality.

Philalethes. Which is an illustration of the rule of logic that false premises may give a true conclusion.

Demopheles. Let me hold you to your conclusion: let me remind you that religion has two sides. If it can't stand when looked at from its theoretical, that is, its intellectual side; on the other hand, from the moral side, it proves itself the only means of guiding, controlling and mollifying those races of animals endowed with reason, whose kinship with the ape does not exclude a kinship with the tiger But at the same time religion is, as a rule, a sufficient satisfaction for their dull metaphysical necessities. You don't seem to me to possess a proper idea of the difference, wide as the heavens asunder, the deep gulf between your man of learning and enlightenment, accustomed to the process of thinking, and the heavy, clumsy, dull and sluggish consciousness of humanity's beasts of burden, whose thoughts have once and for all taken the direction of anxiety about their livelihood, and

cannot be put in motion in any other; whose muscular strength is so exclusively brought into play that the nervous power, which makes intelligence, sinks to a very low ebb. People like that must have something tangible which they can lay hold of on the slippery and thorny pathway of their life, some sort of beautiful fable, by means of which things can be imparted to them which their crude intelligence can entertain only in picture and parable. Profound explanations and fine distinctions are thrown away upon them. If you conceive religion in this light, and recollect that its aims are above all practical, and only in a subordinate degree theoretical, it will appear to you as something worthy of the highest respect.

Philalethes. A respect which will finally rest upon the principle that the end sanctifies the means. I don't feel in favour of a compromise on a basis like that. Religion may be an excellent means of taming and training the perverse, obtuse and ill-disposed members of the biped race: in the eyes of the friend of truth every fraud, even though it be a pious one, is to be condemned. A system of deception, a pack of lies, would be a strange means of inculcating virtue. The flag to which I have taken the oath is truth: I shall remain faithful to it everywhere, and whether I succeed or not, I shall fight for light and truth! If I see religion on the wrong side—

Demopheles. But you won't. Religion isn't a deception: it is true and the most important of all truths. Because its doctrines are, as I have said, of such a lofty kind that the multitude can't grasp them without an intermediary; because, I say, its light

would blind the ordinary eye, it comes forward wrapt in the veil of allegory and teaches, not indeed what is exactly true in itself, but what is true in respect of the lofty meaning contained in it; and, understood in this way, religion is the truth.

Philalethes. It would be all right if religion were only at liberty to be true in a merely allegorical sense. But its contention is that it is downright true in the proper sense of the word. Herein lies the deception, and it is here that the friend of truth must take up a hostile position.

Demopheles. This deception is a *sine qua non.* If religion were to admit that it was only the allegorical meaning in its doctrines which was true, it would rob itself of all efficacy. Such rigorous treatment as this would destroy its invaluable influence on the hearts and morals of mankind. Instead of insisting on that with pedantic obstinacy, look at its great achievements in the practical sphere, its furtherance of good and kindly feelings, its guidance in conduct, the support and consolation it gives to suffering humanity in life and death. How much you ought to guard against letting theoretical cavils discredit in the eyes of the multitude, and finally wrest from it, something which is an inexhaustible source of consolation and tranquillity, something which, in its hard lot, it needs so much, even more than we do. On that score alone, religion should be free from attack.

Philalethes. With that kind of argument you could have driven Luther from the field, when he attacked the sale of indulgences. How many a man got consolation from the letters of indulgence, a consolation

which nothing else could give, a complete tranquillity; so that he joyfully departed with the fullest confidence in the packet of them which he held in his hand at the hour of death, convinced that they were so many cards of admission to all the nine heavens. What is the use of grounds of consolation and tranquillity which are constantly overshadowed by the Damocles-sword of illusion? The truth, my dear sir, is the only safe thing; the truth alone remains steadfast and trusty; it is the only solid consolation; it is the indestructible diamond.

Demopheles. Yes, if you had truth in your pocket, ready to favour us with it on demand. All you've got are metaphysical systems, in which nothing is certain but the headaches they cost. Before you take anything away, you must have something better to put in its place.

Philalethes. That's what you keep on saying. To free a man from error is to give, not to take away. Knowledge that a thing is false is a truth. Error always does harm: sooner or later it will bring mischief to the man who harbours it. Then give up deceiving people; confess ignorance of what you don't know, and leave everyone to form his own articles of faith for himself. Perhaps they won't turn out so bad, especially as they'll rub one another's corners down, and mutually rectify mistakes. The existence of many views will at any rate lay a foundation of tolerance. Those who possess knowledge and capacity may betake themselves to the study of philosophy, or even in their own persons carry the history of philosophy a step further.

Demopheles. That'll be a pretty business! A whole nation of raw metaphysicians, wrangling and eventually coming to blows with one another!

Philalethes. Well, well, a few blows here and there are the sauce of life; or at any rate a very inconsiderable evil, compared with such things as priestly dominion, plundering of the laity, persecution of heretics, courts of inquisition, crusades, religious wars, massacres of St. Bartholomew. These have been the results of popular metaphysics imposed from without; so I stick to the old saying that you can't get grapes from thistles, nor expect good to come from a pack of lies.

Demopheles. How often must I repeat that religion is anything but a pack of lies? It is truth itself, only in a mythical, allegorical vesture. But when you spoke of your plan of everyone being his own founder of religion, I wanted to say that a particularism like this is totally opposed to human nature, and would consequently destroy all social order. Man is a metaphysical animal,—that is to say, he has paramount metaphysical necessities; accordingly, he conceives life above all in its metaphysical significance and wishes to bring everything into line with that. Consequently, however strange it may sound in view of the uncertainty of all dogmas, agreement in the fundamentals of metaphysics is the chief thing; because a genuine and lasting bond of union is only possible among those who are of one opinion on these points. As a result of this, the main point of likeness and of contrast between nations is rather religion than government, or even language; and so the fabric of society, the State, will stand firm only when founded

on a system of metaphysics which is acknowledged by all. This, of course, can only be a popular system,—that is, a religion: it becomes part and parcel of the constitution of the State, of all the public manifestations of the national life, and also of all solemn acts of individuals. This was the case in ancient India, among the Persians, Egyptians, Jews, Greeks and Romans: it is still the case in the Brahman, Buddhist and Mohammedan nations. In China there are three faiths, it is true, of which the most prevalent—Buddhism—is precisely the one which is not protected by the State: still, there is a saying in China, universally acknowledged, and of daily application, that "the three faiths are only one,"—that is to say, they agree in essentials. The Emperor confesses all three together at the same time. And Europe is the union of Christian States: Christianity is the basis of everyone of the members, and the common bond of all. Hence Turkey, though geographically in Europe, is not properly to be reckoned as belonging to it. In the same way, the European princes hold their place "by the grace of God:" and the Pope is the vicegerent of God. Accordingly, as his throne was the highest, he used to wish all thrones to be regarded as held in fee from him. In the same way, too, Archbishops and Bishops, as such, possessed temporal power; and in England they still have seats and votes in the Upper House. Protestant princes, as such, are heads of their churches: in England, a few years ago, this was a girl eighteen years old. By the revolt from the Pope, the Reformation shattered the European fabric, and in a special degree dissolved the true unity of

Germany by destroying its common religious faith. This union, which had practically come to an end, had, accordingly, to be restored later on by artificial and purely political means. You see, then, how closely connected a common faith is with the social order and the constitution of every State. Faith is everywhere the support of the laws and the constitution, the foundation, therefore, of the social fabric, which could hardly hold together at all if religion did not lend weight to the authority of government and the dignity of the ruler.

Philalethes. Oh, yes, princes use God as a kind of bogey to frighten grown-up children to bed with, if nothing else avails: that's why they attach so much importance to the Deity. Very well. Let me, in passing, recommend our rulers to give their serious attention, regularly twice every year, to the fifteenth chapter of the First Book of Samuel, that they may be constantly reminded of what it means to prop the throne on the altar. Besides, since the stake, that *ultima ratio theologorum,* has gone out of fashion, this method of government has lost its efficacy. For, as you know, religions are like glow-worms; they shine only when it's dark. A certain amount of general ignorance is the condition of all religions, the element in which alone they can exist. And as soon as astronomy, natural science, geology, history, the knowledge of countries and peoples have spread their light broadcast, and philosophy finally is permitted to say a word, every faith founded on miracles and revelation must disappear; and philosophy takes its place. In Europe the day of knowledge and science

dawned towards the end of the fifteenth century with the appearance of the Renaissance Platonists: its sun rose higher in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries so rich in results, and scattered the mists of the Middle Age. Church and Faith were compelled to disappear in the same proportion; and so in the eighteenth century English and French philosophers were able to take up an attitude of direct hostility; until, finally, under Frederick the Great, Kant appeared, and took away from religious belief the support it had previously enjoyed from philosophy: he emancipated the handmaid of theology, and in attacking the question with German thoroughness and patience, gave it an earnest instead of a frivolous tone. The consequence of this is that we see Christianity undermined in the nineteenth century, a serious faith in it almost completely gone; we see it fighting even for bare existence, whilst anxious princes try to set it up a little by artificial means, as a doctor uses a drug on a dying patient. In this connection there is a passage in Condorcet's "*Des Progrès de l'esprit humain*," which looks as if written as a warning to our age: "the religious zeal shown by philosophers and great men was only a political devotion; and every religion which allows itself to be defended as a belief that may usefully be left to the people, can only hope for an agony more or less prolonged." In the whole course of the events which I have indicated, you may always observe that faith and knowledge are related as the two scales of a balance; when the one goes up, the other goes down. So sensitive is the balance that it indicates momentary influences. When,

for instance, at the beginning of this century, those inroads of French robbers under the leadership of Buonaparte, and the enormous efforts necessary for driving them out and punishing them, had brought about a temporary neglect of science and consequently a certain decline in the general increase of knowledge, the Church immediately began to raise her head again and Faith began to show fresh signs of life; which, to be sure, in keeping with the times, was partly poetical in its nature. On the other hand, in the more than thirty years of peace which followed, leisure and prosperity furthered the building up of science and the spread of knowledge in an extraordinary degree: the consequence of which is what I have indicated, the dissolution and threatened fall of religion. Perhaps the time is approaching which has so often been prophesied, when religion will take her departure from European humanity, like a nurse which the child has out-grown: the child will now be given over to the instructions of a tutor. For there is no doubt that religious doctrines which are founded merely on authority, miracles and revelations, are only suited to the childhood of humanity. Everyone will admit that a race, the past duration of which on the earth all accounts, physical and historical, agree in placing at not more than some hundred times the life of a man of sixty, is as yet only in its first childhood.

Demopheles. Instead of taking an undisguised pleasure in prophesying the downfall of Christianity, how I wish you would consider what a measureless debt of gratitude European humanity owes to it, how greatly it has benefited by the religion which, after a

long interval, followed it from its old home in the East. Europe received from Christianity ideas which were quite new to it, the knowledge, I mean, of the fundamental truth that life cannot be an end-in-itself, that the true end of our existence lies beyond it. The Greeks and Romans had placed this end altogether in our present life, so that in this sense they may certainly be called blind heathens. And, in keeping with this view of life, all their virtues can be reduced to what is serviceable to the community, to what is useful, in fact. Aristotle says quite naively, *Those virtues must necessarily be the greatest which are the most useful to others.* So the ancients thought patriotism the highest virtue, although it is really a very doubtful one, since narrowness, prejudice, vanity and an enlightened self-interest are main elements in it. Just before the passage I quoted, Aristotle enumerates all the virtues, in order to discuss them singly. They are *Justice, Courage, Temperance, Magnificence, Magnanimity, Liberality, Gentleness, Good Sense* and *Wisdom.* How different from the Christian virtues! Plato himself, incomparably the most transcendental philosopher of pre-Christian antiquity, knows no higher virtue than *Justice*; and he alone recommends it unconditionally and for its own sake, whereas the rest make a happy life, *vita beata,* the aim of all virtue, and moral conduct the way to attain it. Christianity freed European humanity from this shallow, crude identification of itself with the hollow uncertain existence of every day,

coelumque tueri
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.

Christianity, accordingly, does not preach mere Justice, but *the Love of Mankind, Compassion, Good Works, Forgiveness, Love of your Enemies, Patience, Humility, Resignation, Faith* and *Hope.* It even went a step further, and taught that the world is of evil, and that we need deliverance. It preached despisal of the world, self-denial, chastity, giving up of one's own will, that is, turning away from life and its illusory pleasures. It taught the healing power of pain: an instrument of torture is the symbol of Christianity. I am quite ready to admit that this earnest, this only correct view of life was thousands of years previously spread all over Asia in other forms, as it is still, independently of Christianity; but for European humanity it was a new and great revelation. For it is well known that the population of Europe consists of Asiatic races driven out as wanderers from their own homes, and gradually settling down in Europe; on their wanderings these races lost the original religion of their homes, and with it the right view of life: so, under a new sky, they formed religions for themselves, which were rather crude; the worship of Odin, for instance, the Druidic or the Greek religion, the metaphysical content of which was little and shallow. In the meantime the Greeks developed a special, one might almost say, an instinctive sense of beauty, belonging to them alone of all the nations who have ever existed on the earth, peculiar, fine and exact: so that their mythology took, in the mouth of their poets, and in the hands of their artists, an exceedingly beautiful and pleasing shape. On the other hand, the true and deep significance of life was lost to the

Greeks and Romans. They lived on like grown-up children, till Christianity came and recalled them to the serious side of existence.

Philalethes. And to see the effects you need only compare antiquity with the Middle Age; the time of Pericles, say, with the fourteenth century. You could scarcely believe you were dealing with the same kind of beings. There, the finest development of humanity, excellent institutions, wise laws, shrewdly apportioned offices, rationally ordered freedom, all the arts, including poetry and philosophy, at their best; the production of works which, after thousands of years, are unparalleled, the creations, as it were, of a higher order of beings, which we can never imitate; life embellished by the noblest fellowship, as pourtrayed in Xenophen's *Banquet.* Look on the other picture, if you can; a time at which the Church had enslaved the minds, and violence the bodies of men, that knights and priests might lay the whole weight of life upon the common beast of burden, the third estate. There, you have might as right, Feudalism and Fanaticism in close alliance, and in their train abominable ignorance and darkness of mind, a corresponding intolerance, discord of creeds, religious wars, crusades, inquisitions and persecutions; as the form of fellowship, chivalry, compounded of savagery and folly, with its pedantic system of ridiculous false pretences carried to an extreme, its degrading superstition and apish veneration for women. Gallantry is the residue of this veneration, deservedly requited as it is by feminine arrogance; it affords continual food for laughter to all Asiatics, and the Greeks would

service of women; it imposed deeds of heroism, *cours d'amour*, bombastic Troubadour songs, etc.; although it is to be observed that these last buffooneries, which had an intellectual side, were chiefly at home in France; whereas amongst the material sluggish Germans, the knights distinguished themselves rather by drinking and stealing; they were good at boozing and filling their castles with plunder; though in the courts, to be sure, there was no lack of insipid love-songs. What caused this utter transformation? Migration and Christianity.

Demopheles. I am glad you reminded me of it. Migration was the source of the evil; Christianity the dam on which it broke. It was chiefly by Christianity that the raw, wild hordes which came flooding in were controlled and tamed. The savage man must first of all learn to kneel, to venerate, to obey; after that, he can be civilised. This was done in Ireland by St. Patrick, in Germany by Winifried the Saxon, who was a genuine Boniface. It was migration of peoples, the last advance of Asiatic races towards Europe, followed only by the fruitless attempts of those under Attila, Genghis Khan, and Timur, and as a comic afterpiece, by the gipsies,—it was this movement which swept away the humanity of the ancients. Christianity was precisely the principle which set itself to work against this savagery; just as later, through the whole of the Middle Age, the Church and its hierarchy were most necessary to set limits to the savage barbarism of those masters of

violence, the princes and knights: it was what broke up the ice-floes in that mighty deluge. Still, the chief aim of Christianity is not so much to make this life pleasant as to render us worthy of a better. It looks away over this span of time, over this fleeting dream, and seeks to lead us to eternal welfare. Its tendency is ethical in the highest sense of the word, a sense unknown in Europe till its advent; as I have shown you; by putting the morality and religion of the ancients side by side with those of Christendom.

Philalethes. You are quite right as regards theory; but look at the practice! In comparison with the ages of Christianity the ancient world was unquestionably less cruel than the Middle Age, with its deaths by exquisite torture, its innumerable burnings at the stake. The ancients, further, were very enduring, laid great stress on justice, frequently sacrificed themselves for their country, showed such traces of every kind of magnanimity, and such genuine manliness, that to this day an acquaintance with their thoughts and actions is called the study of Humanity. The fruits of Christianity were religious wars, butcheries, crusades, inquisitions, extermination of the natives in America, and the introduction of African slaves in their place; and among the ancients there is nothing analogous to this, nothing that can be compared with it; for the slaves of the ancients, the *familia*, the *vernæ*, were a contented race, and faithfully devoted to their masters' service, and as different from the miserable negroes of the sugar plantations, which are a disgrace to humanity, as their two colours are distinct. Those special moral delinquencies for which

be the case, are trifles compared with the Christian enormities I have mentioned. Can you then, all considered, maintain that mankind has been really made morally better by Christianity?

Demopheles. If the results haven't everywhere been in keeping with the purity and truth of the doctrine, it may be because the doctrine has been too noble, too elevated for mankind, that its aim has been placed too high. It was so much easier to come up to the heathen system, or to the Mohammedan. It is precisely what is noble and dignified that is most liable everywhere to misuse and fraud: *abusus optimi pessimus.* Those high doctrines have accordingly now and then served as a pretext for the most abominable proceedings, and for acts of unmitigated wickedness. The downfall of the institutions of the old world, as well as of its arts and sciences, is, as I have said, to be attributed to the inroad of foreign barbarians. The inevitable result of this inroad was that ignorance and savagery got the upper hand; consequently violence and knavery established their dominion, and knights and priests became a burden to mankind. It is partly, however, to be explained by the fact that the new religion made eternal and not temporal welfare the object of desire, taught that simplicity of heart was to be preferred to knowledge, and looked askance at all worldly pleasure. Now the arts and sciences subserve worldly pleasure; but in so far as they could be made serviceable to religion they were promoted, and attained a certain degree of perfection.

Philalethes. In a very narrow sphere. The sciences were suspicious companions, and as such, were placed under restrictions: on the other hand, darling ignorance, that element so necessary to a system of faith, was carefully nourished.

Demopheles. And yet mankind's possessions in the way of knowledge up to that period, which were preserved in the writings of the ancients, were saved from destruction by the clergy, especially by those in the monasteries. How would it have fared if Christianity hadn't come in just before the migration of peoples?

Philalethes. It would really be a most useful inquiry to try and make, with the coldest impartiality, an unprejudiced, careful and accurate comparison of the advantages and disadvantages which may be put down to religion. For that, of course, a much larger knowledge of historical and psychological data than either of us command would be necessary. Academies might make it a subject for a prize essay.

Demopheles. They'll take good care not to do so.

Philalethes. I'm surprised to hear you say that: it's a bad look out for religion. However, there are academies which, in proposing a subject for competition, make it a secret condition that the prize is to go to the man who best interprets their own view If we could only begin by getting a statistician to tell us how many crimes are prevented every year by religious, and how many by other motives, there would be very few of the former. If a man feels tempted to commit a crime, you may rely upon it that the first consideration which enters his head is the penalty appointed for it, and the chances that it will fall

upon him: then comes, as a second consideration, the risk to his reputation. If I am not mistaken, he will ruminate by the hour on these two impediments, before he ever takes a thought of religious considerations. If he gets safely over those two first bulwarks against crime, I think religion alone will very rarely hold him back from it.

Demopheles. I think that it will very often do so, especially when its influence works through the medium of custom. An atrocious act is at once felt to be repulsive. What is this but the effect of early impressions? Think, for instance, how often a man, especially if of noble birth, will make tremendous sacrifices to perform what he has promised, motived entirely by the fact that his father has often earnestly impressed upon him in his childhood that "a man of honour" or "a gentleman" or "a cavalier" always keeps his word inviolate.

Philalethes. That's no use unless there is a certain inborn honourableness. You mustn't ascribe to religion what results from innate goodness of character, by which compassion for the man who would suffer by the crime keeps a man from committing it. This is the genuine moral motive, and as such it is independent of all religions.

Demopheles. But this is a motive which rarely affects the multitude unless it assumes a religious aspect. The religious aspect at any rate strengthens its power for good. Yet without any such natural foundation, religious motives alone are powerful to prevent crime. We need not be surprised at this in the case of the multitude, when we see that even

people of education pass now and then under the influence, not indeed of religious motives, which are founded on something which is at least allegorically true, but of the most absurd superstition, and allow themselves to be guided by it all their life long; as, for instance, undertaking nothing on a Friday, refusing to sit down thirteen at table, obeying chance omens, and the like. How much more likely is the multitude to be guided by such things. You can't form any adequate idea of the narrow limits of the mind in its raw state; it is a place of absolute darkness, especially when, as often happens, a bad, unjust, and malicious heart is at the bottom of it. People in this condition—and they form the great bulk of humanity—must be led and controlled as well as may be, even if it be by really superstitious motives; until such time as they become susceptible to truer and better ones. As an instance of the direct working of religion, may be cited the fact, common enough, in Italy especially, of a thief restoring stolen goods, through the influence of his confessor, who says he won't absolve him if he doesn't. Think again of the case of an oath, where religion shows a most decided influence; whether it be that a man places himself expressly in the position of a purely *moral being*, and as such looks upon himself as solemnly appealed to, as seems to be the case in France, where the formula is simply *je le jure*, and also among the Quakers, whose solemn *yea* or *nay* is regarded as a substitute for the oath; or whether it be that a man really believes he is pronouncing something which may affect his eternal happiness,—a belief which is pre-

sumably only the investiture of the former feeling. At any rate, religious considerations are a means of awaking and calling out a man's moral nature. How often it happens that a man agrees to take a false oath, and then, when it comes to the point, suddenly refuses, and truth and right win the day.

Philalethes. Oftener still false oaths are really taken, and truth and right trampled under foot, though all witnesses of the oath know it well! Still you are quite right to quote the oath as an undeniable example of the practical efficacy of religion. But, in spite of all you've said, I doubt whether the efficacy of religion goes much beyond this. Just think; if a public proclamation were suddenly made, announcing the repeal of all the criminal laws; I fancy neither you nor I would have the courage to go home from here under the protection of religious motives. If, in the same way, all religions were declared untrue, we could, under the protection of the laws alone, go on living as before, without any special addition to our apprehensions or our measures of precaution. I will go beyond this, and say that religions have very frequently exercised a decidedly demoralising influence. One may say generally that duties towards God and duties towards humanity are in inverse ratio. It is easy to let adulation of the Deity make amends for lack of proper behaviour towards man. And so we see that in all times and in all countries the great majority of mankind find it much easier to beg their way to heaven by prayers than to deserve to go there by their actions. In every religion it soon comes to be the case that faith, ceremonies, rites and the like

are proclaimed to be more agreeable to the Divine will than moral actions; the former, especially if they are bound up with the emoluments of the clergy, gradually come to be looked upon as a substitute for the latter. Sacrifices in temples, the saying of masses, the founding of chapels, the planting of crosses by the road side, soon come to be the most meritorious works, so that even great crimes are expiated by them, as also by penance, subjection to priestly authority, confessions, pilgrimages, donations to the temples and the clergy, the building of monasteries and the like. The consequence of all this is that the priests finally appear as middlemen in the corruption of the gods. And if matters don't go quite so far as that, where is the religion whose adherents don't consider prayers, praise and manifold acts of devotion, a substitute, at least in part, for moral conduct? Look at England, where by an audacious piece of priestcraft, the Christian Sunday, introduced by Constantine the Great as a substitute for the Jewish Sabbath, is in a mendacious way identified with it, and takes its name,—and this in order that the commands of Jehovah for the Sabbath, (that is, the day on which the Almighty had to rest from his six days' labour, so that it is essentially the last day of the week), might be applied to the Christian Sunday, the *dies solis*, the first day of the week which the sun opens in glory, the day of devotion and joy. The consequence of this fraud is that "Sabbath-breaking," or "the desecration of the Sabbath," that is, the slightest occupation, whether of business or pleasure, all games, music, sewing, worldly books, are on Sundays looked upon as great sins. Surely the

ordinary man must believe that if, as his spiritual guides impress upon him, he is only constant in "a strict observance of the holy Sabbath," and "a regular attendance on Divine Service," that is, if he only invariably idles away his time on Sundays and doesn't fail to sit two hours in church to hear the same litany for the thousandth time and mutter it in tune with the others, he may reckon on indulgence in regard to those little peccadilloes which he occasionally allows himself. Those devils in human form, the slave owners and slave traders in the Free States of North America (they should be called the Slave States) are, as a rule, orthodox, pious Anglicans who would consider it a grave sin to work on Sundays; and in confidence in this, and their regular attendance at church, they hope for eternal happiness. The demoralising tendency of religion is less problematical than its moral influence. How great and how certain that moral influence must be to make amends for the enormities which religions, especially the Christian and Mohammedan religions, have produced and spread over the earth! Think of the fanaticism, the endless persecutions, the religious wars, that sanguinary frenzy of which the ancients had no conception! think of the crusades, a butchery lasting two hundred years and inexcusable, its war-cry "*It is the will of God,*" its object to gain possession of the grave of one who preached love and sufferance! think of the cruel expulsion and extermination of the Moors and Jews from Spain! think of the orgies of blood, the inquisitions, the heretical tribunals, the bloody and terrible conquests of the Mohammedans in three continents, or those of Chris-

tianity in America, whose inhabitants were for the most part, and in Cuba entirely, exterminated. According to Las Casas, Christianity murdered twelve millions in forty years, of course all *in majorem Dei gloriam* and for the propagation of the Gospel, and because what wasn't Christian wasn't even looked upon as human! I have, it is true, touched upon these matters before; but when in our day, we hear of "Latest News from the Kingdom of God,"* we shall not be weary of bringing old news to mind. And above all, don't let us forget India, the cradle of the human race, or at least of that part of it to which we belong, where first Mohammedans, and then Christians, were most cruelly infuriated against the adherents of the original faith of mankind. The destruction or disfigurement of the ancient temples and idols, a lamentable, mischievous and barbarous act, still bears witness to the monotheistic fury of the Mohammedans, carried on from Marmud the Ghaznevid of cursed memory down to Aureng Zeb the fratricide, whom the Portuguese Christians have zealously imitated by destruction of temples and the *auto da fè* of the inquisition at Goa. Don't let us forget the chosen people of God, who after they had, by Jehovah's express command, stolen from their old and trusty friends in Egypt the gold and silver vessels which had been lent to them, made a murderous and plundering inroad into "the Promised Land," with the murderer Moses at their head, to tear it from the rightful owners, again by the same Jehovah's express

* A missionary periodical, the fortieth annual number of which appeared in 1856.

and repeated commands, showing no mercy, exterminating the inhabitants, women, children and all, (Joshua, ch. 9 and 10). And all this, simply because they weren't circumcised and didn't know Jehovah, which was reason enough to justify every enormity against them; just as for the same reason, in earlier times, the infamous knavery of the patriarch Jacob and his chosen people against Hamor, King of Shalem, and his people, is reported to his glory because the people were unbelievers! (Genesis xxxiii. 18.) Truly, it is the worst side of religions that the believers of one religion have allowed themselves every sin against those of another, and with the utmost ruffianism and cruelty persecuted them; the Mohammedans against the Christians and Hindoos; the Christians against the Hindoos, Mohammedans, American natives, Negroes, Jews, heretics, and others.

Perhaps I go too far in saying *all* religions. For the sake of truth, I must add that the fanatical enormities perpetrated in the name of religion are only to be put down to the adherents of monotheistic creeds, that is, the Jewish faith and its two branches, Christianity and Islamism. We hear of nothing of the kind in the case of Hindoos and Buddhists. Although it is a matter of common knowledge that about the fifth century of our era Buddhism was driven out by the Brahmans from its ancient home in the southernmost part of the Indian peninsula, and afterwards spread over the whole of the rest of Asia, as far as I know, we have no definite account of any crimes of violence, or wars, or cruelties, perpetrated in the course of it. That may, of course, be attributable

to the obscurity which veils the history of those countries; but the exceedingly mild character of their religion, together with their unceasing inculcation of forbearance towards all living things, and the fact that Brahmanism by its caste system properly admits no proselytes, allows one to hope that their adherents may be acquitted of shedding of blood on a large scale, and of cruelty in any form. Spence Hardy, in his excellent book on *Eastern Monachism*, praises the extraordinary tolerance of the Buddhists, and adds his assurance that the annals of Buddhism will furnish fewer instances of religious persecution than those of any other religion. As a matter of fact, it is only to monotheism that intolerance is essential; an only god is by his nature a jealous god, who can allow no other god to exist. Polytheistic gods, on the other hand, are naturally tolerant; they live and let live; their own colleagues are the chief objects of their sufferance, as being gods of the same religion. This toleration is afterwards extended to foreign gods, who are, accordingly, hospitably received, and later on admitted, in some cases, to an equality of rights; the chief example of which is shown by the fact that the Romans willingly admitted and venerated Phrygian, Egyptian and other gods. Hence it is that monotheistic religions alone furnish the spectacle of religious wars, religious persecutions, heretical tribunals, that breaking of idols and destruction of images of the gods, that razing of Indian temples, and Egyptian colossi, which had looked on the sun three thousand years; just because a jealous god had said, *Thou shalt make no graven image.*

mankind; but religion appears to me to be not so much a satisfaction as an abuse of those needs. At any rate we have seen that in regard to the furtherance of morality, its utility is, for the most part, problematical, its disadvantages, and especially the atrocities which have followed in its train, patent to the light of day. Of course it is quite a different matter if we consider the utility of religion as a prop of thrones; for where these are held "by the grace of God," throne and altar are intimately associated; and every wise prince who loves his throne and his family will appear at the head of his people as an exemplar of true religion. Even Machiavelli, in the eighteenth chapter of his book, most earnestly recommended religion to princes. Beyond this one may say that revealed religions stand to philosophy exactly in the relation of "sovereigns by the grace of God," to "the sovereignty of the people;" so that the two former terms of the parallel are in natural alliance.

Demopheles. Oh, don't take that tone! You're going hand in hand with ochlocracy and anarchy, the arch-enemy of all legislative order, all civilisation and all humanity.

Philalethes. You are right. It was only a sophism of mine, what the fencing master calls a feint. I retract it. But see how disputing sometimes makes an honest man unjust and malicious. Let us stop.

Demopheles. I can't help regretting that, after all the trouble I've taken, I haven't altered your disposition in regard to religion. On the other hand, I

Philalethes. I believe you; for as we read in Hudibras—

> "He that complies against his will
> Is of his own opinion still."

My consolation is that, alike in controversies and in taking mineral waters, the after effects are the true ones.

Demopheles. Well, I hope it'll be beneficial in your case.

Philalethes. It might be so, if I could digest a certain Spanish proverb.

Demopheles. Which is?

Philalethes. *Behind the cross stands the devil.*

Demopheles. Come, don't let us part with sarcasms. Let us rather admit that religion, like Janus, or better still, like the Brahman god of death, Yama, has two faces, and like him, one friendly, the other sullen. Each of us has kept his eyes fixed on one alone.

Philalethes. You are right, old fellow!

A
FEW WORDS ON PANTHEISM.

A FEW WORDS ON PANTHEISM.

THE controversy between Theism and Pantheism might be presented in an allegorical or dramatic form by supposing a dialogue between two persons in the pit of a theatre at Milan during the performance of a piece. One of them, convinced that he is in Girolamo's renowned marionette-theatre, admires the art by which the director gets up the dolls and guides their movements. "Oh, you are quite mistaken," says the other, "we're in the Teatro della Scala; it is the manager and his troop who are on the stage; they are the persons you see before you; the poet too is taking a part."

The chief objection I have to Pantheism is that it says nothing. To call the world "God" is not to explain it; it is only to enrich our language with a superfluous synonym for the word "world." It comes to the same thing whether you say "the world is God," or "God is the world." But if you start from "God" as something that is given in experience, and has to be explained, and then say, "God is the world," you are affording what is to some extent an explanation, in so far as you are reducing what is unknown to what is partly known (*ignotum per notius*); but it is only a verbal explanation. If, however, you start from what is really given, that is

explaining what is unknown by what is more unknown

Hence Pantheism presupposes Theism; only in so far as you start from a god, that is, in so far as you possess him as something with which you are already familiar, can you end by identifying him with the world; and your purpose in doing so is to put him out of the way in a decent fashion. In other words, you do not start clear from the world as something that requires explanation; you start from God as something that is given, and not knowing what to do with him, you make the world take over his rôle. This is the origin of Pantheism. Taking an unprejudiced view of the world as it is, no one would dream of regarding it as a god. It must be a very ill-advised god who knows no better way of diverting himself than by turning into such a world as ours, such a mean, shabby world, there to take the form of innumerable millions who live indeed, but are fretted and tormented, and who manage to exist a while together only by preying on one another; to bear misery, need and death, without measure and without object, in the form, for instance, of millions of negro slaves, or of the three million weavers in Europe who, in hunger and care, lead a miserable existence in damp rooms or the cheerless halls of a factory. What a pastime this for a god, who must, as such, be used to another mode of existence!

We find accordingly that what is described as the great advance from Theism to Pantheism, if looked

fused may be the idea which we connect with the word "God," there are two predicates which are inseparable from it, the highest power and the highest wisdom. It is absolutely absurd to think that a being endowed with these qualities should have put himself into the position described above. Theism, on the other hand, is something which is merely unproved; and if it is difficult to look upon the infinite world as the work of a personal, and therefore individual, Being, the like of which we know only from our experience of the animal world, it is nevertheless not an absolutely absurd idea. That a Being, at once almighty and all-good, should create a world of torment is always conceivable; even though we do not know why he does so; and accordingly we find that when people ascribe the height of goodness to this Being, they set up the inscrutable nature of his wisdom as the refuge by which the doctrine escapes the charge of absurdity. Pantheism, however, assumes that the creative God is himself the world of infinite torment, and, in this little world alone, dies every second, and that entirely of his own will; which is absurd. It would be much more correct to identify the world with the devil, as the venerable author of the *Deutsche Theologie* has, in fact, done in a passage of his immortal work, where he says, "*Wherefore the evil spirit and nature are one, and where nature is not overcome, neither is the evil adversary overcome.*"

mystics to the Nirvana. The latter, however, state more about the Nirvana than they know, which is not done by the Buddhists, whose Nirvana is accordingly a relative nothing. It is only Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans who give its proper and correct meaning to the word "God."

The expression, often heard now-a-days, "the world is an end-in-itself," leaves it uncertain whether Pantheism or a simple Fatalism is to be taken as the explanation of it. But, whichever it be, the expression looks upon the world from a physical point of view only, and leaves out of sight its moral significance, because you cannot assume a moral significance without presenting the world as means to a higher end. The notion that the world has a physical but not a moral meaning is the most mischievous error sprung from the greatest mental perversity.

ON BOOKS AND READING.

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IGNORANCE is degrading only when found in company with riches. The poor man is restrained by poverty and need: labour occupies his thoughts, and takes the place of knowledge. But rich men who are ignorant live for their lusts only, and are like the beasts of the field; as may be seen every day: and they can also be reproached for not having used wealth and leisure for that which gives them their greatest value.

When we read, another person thinks for us: we merely repeat his mental process. In learning to write, the pupil goes over with his pen what the teacher has outlined in pencil: so in reading; the greater part of the work of thought is already done for us. This is why it relieves us to take up a book after being occupied with our own thoughts. And in reading, the mind is, in fact, only the playground of another's thoughts. So it comes about that if anyone spends almost the whole day in reading, and by way of relaxation devotes the intervals to some thoughtless pastime, he gradually loses the capacity for thinking; just as the man who always rides at last forgets how to walk. This is the case with many learned persons: they have read themselves stupid. For to occupy every spare moment in reading, and to do nothing but read, is even more paralysing to the mind than con-

gaged in it to follow their own thoughts. A spring never free from the pressure of some foreign body at last loses its elasticity: and so does the mind if other people's thoughts are constantly forced upon it. Just as you can ruin the stomach and impair the whole body by taking too much nourishment, so you can overfill and choke the mind by feeding it too much. The more you read, the fewer are the traces left by what you have read: the mind becomes like a tablet crossed over and over with writing. There is no time for ruminating, and in no other way can you assimilate what you have read. If you read on and on without setting your own thoughts to work, what you have read can not strike root, and is generally lost. It is, in fact, just the same with mental as with bodily food: hardly the fifth part of what one takes is assimilated. The rest passes off in evaporation, respiration, and the like.

The result of all this is that thoughts put on paper are nothing more than footsteps in the sand: you see the way the man has gone, but to know what he saw on his walk, you want his eyes.

There is no quality of style that can be gained by reading writers who possess it; whether it be persuasiveness, imagination, the gift of drawing comparisons, boldness, bitterness, brevity, grace, ease of expression or wit, unexpected contrasts, a laconic or naive manner, and the like. But if these qualities are already in us, exist, that is to say, potentially, we can call them forth and bring them to consciousness; we can learn the purposes to which they can be put;

we can be strengthened in our inclination to use them, or get courage to do so; we can judge by examples the effect of applying them, and so acquire the correct use of them; and of course it is only when we have arrived at that point that we actually possess these qualities. The only way in which reading can form style is by teaching us the use to which we can put our own natural gifts. We must have these gifts before we begin to learn the use of them. Without them, reading teaches us nothing but cold, dead mannerisms and makes us shallow imitators.

The strata of the earth preserve in rows the creatures which lived in former ages; and the array of books on the shelves of a library stores up in like manner the errors of the past and the way in which they have been exposed. Like those creatures, they too were full of life in their time, and made a great deal of noise; but now they are stiff and fossilized, and an object of curiosity to the literary palæontologist alone.

Herodotus relates that Xerxes wept at the sight of his army, which stretched further than the eye could reach, in the thought that of all these, after a hundred years, not one would be alive. And in looking over a huge catalogue of new books, one might weep at thinking that, when ten years have passed, not one of them will be heard of.

It is in literature as in life: wherever you turn, you stumble at once upon the incorrigible mob of humanity, swarming in all directions, crowding and soiling

everything, like flies in summer. Hence the number which no man can count, of bad books, those rank weeds of literature, which draw nourishment from the corn and choke it. The time, money and attention of the public, which rightfully belong to good books and their noble aims, they take for themselves: they are written for the mere purpose of making money or procuring places. So they are not only useless; they do positive mischief. Nine tenths of the whole of our present literature has no other aim than to get a few shillings out of the pockets of the public; and to this end author, publisher and reviewer are in league.

Let me mention a crafty and wicked trick, albeit a profitable and successful one, practised by littérateurs, hack writers and voluminous authors. In complete disregard of good taste and the true culture of the period, they have succeeded in getting the whole of the world of fashion into leading strings, so that they are all trained to read in time, and all the same thing, viz. *the newest books*; and that for the purpose of getting food for conversation in the circles in which they move. This is the aim served by bad novels, produced by writers who were once celebrated, as Spindler, Bulwer Lytton, Eugene Sue. What can be more miserable than the lot of a reading public like this, always bound to peruse the latest works of extremely commonplace persons who write for money only, and who are therefore never few in number? and for this advantage they are content to know by name only the works of the few superior minds of all ages and all countries. Literary newspapers, too, are a singularly cunning device for robbing the reading public of the

time which, if culture is to be attained, should be devoted to the genuine productions of literature, instead of being occupied by the daily bungling of commonplace persons.

Hence, in regard to reading, it is a very important thing to be able to refrain. Skill in doing so consists in not taking into one's hands any book merely because at the time it happens to be extensively read; such as political or religious pamphlets, novels, poetry, and the like, which make a noise, and may even attain to several editions in the first and last year of their existence. Consider, rather, that the man who writes for fools is always sure of a large audience; be careful to limit your time for reading, and devote it exclusively to the works of those great minds of all times and countries, who o'ertop the rest of humanity, those whom the voice of fame points to as such. These alone really educate and instruct. You can never read bad literature too little, nor good literature too much. Bad books are intellectual poison; they destroy the mind. Because people always read what is new instead of the best of all ages, writers remain in the narrow circle of the ideas which happen to prevail in their time; and so the period sinks deeper and deeper into its own mire.

There are at all times two literatures in progress, running side by side, but little known to each other; the one real, the other only apparent. The former grows into permanent literature; it is pursued by those who live *for* science or poetry; its course is sober and quiet, but extremely slow; and it produces

in Europe scarcely a dozen works in a century; these, however, are permanent. The other kind is pursued by persons who live *on* science or poetry ; it goes at a gallop, with much noise and shouting of partisans ; and every twelvemonth puts a thousand works on the market. But after a few years one asks, Where are they ? where is the glory which came so soon and made so much clamour ? This kind may be called fleeting, and the other, permanent literature.

In the history of politics, half a century is always a considerable time ; the matter which goes to form them is ever on the move ; there is always something going on. But in the history of literature there is often a complete standstill for the same period ; nothing has happened, for clumsy attempts don't count. You are just where you were fifty years previously.

To explain what I mean, let me compare the advance of knowledge among mankind to the course taken by a planet. The false paths on which humanity usually enters after every important advance are like the epicycles in the Ptolemaic system, and after passing through one of them, the world is just where it was before it entered it. But the great minds, who really bring the race further on its course, do not accompany it on the epicycles it makes from time to time. This explains why posthumous fame is often bought at the expense of contemporary praise, and *vice versa.* An instance of such an epicycle is the philosophy started by Fichte and Schelling, and crowned by Hegel's caricature of it. This epicycle was a deviation from the limit to which philosophy

had been ultimately brought by Kant; and at that point I took it up again afterwards, to carry it further. In the intervening period the sham philosophers I have mentioned and some others went through their epicycle, which has just come to an end; so that those who went with them on their course are conscious of the fact that they are exactly at the point from which they started.

This circumstance explains why it is that, every thirty years or so, science, literature, and art, as expressed in the spirit of the age are declared bankrupt. The errors which appear from time to time mount to such a height in that period that the mere weight of their absurdity makes the fabric fall; whilst the opposition to them has been gathering force at the same time. So an upset takes place, often followed by an error in the opposite direction. To exhibit these movements in their periodical return would be the true practical aim of the history of literature: little attention, however, is paid to it. And besides, the comparatively short duration of these periods makes it difficult to collect the data of epochs long gone by, so that it is most convenient to observe how the matter stands in one's own generation. An instance of this tendency, drawn from physical science, is supplied in the Neptunian geology of Werter. But let me keep to the example cited above, the nearest we can take. In German philosophy, the brilliant epoch of Kant was immediately followed by a period which aimed rather at being imposing than at convincing. Instead of being thorough and clear, it tried to be dazzling, hyperbolical, and, in a special degree, unin-

telligible: instead of seeking truth, it intrigued. Philosophy could make no progress in this fashion; and at last the whole school and its method became bankrupt. For the effrontery of Hegel and his fellows came to such a pass,—whether because they talked such sophisticated nonsense, or were so unscrupulously puffed, or because the entire aim of this pretty piece of work was quite obvious,—that in the end there was nothing to prevent the charlatanry of the whole business from becoming manifest to everybody: and when, in consequence of certain disclosures, the favour it had enjoyed in high quarters was withdrawn, the system was openly ridiculed. This most miserable of all the meagre philosophies that have ever existed came to grief, and dragged down with it into the abysm of discredit the systems of Fichte and Schelling which had preceded it. And so, as far as Germany is concerned, the total philosophical incompetence of the first half of the century following upon Kant is quite plain: and still the Germans boast of their talent for philosophy in comparison with foreigners, especially since an English writer has been so maliciously ironical as to call them "a nation of thinkers."

For an example of the general system of epicycles drawn from the history of art, look at the school of sculpture which flourished in the last century and took its name from Bernini, more especially at the development of it which prevailed in France. The ideal of this school was not antique beauty, but commonplace nature: instead of the simplicity and grace of ancient art, it represented the manners of a French minuet. This tendency became bankrupt when, under Winckel-

mann's direction, a return was made to the antique school. The history of painting furnishes an illustration in the first quarter of the century, when art was looked upon merely as a means and instrument of mediæval religious sentiment, and its themes consequently drawn from ecclesiastical subjects alone: these, however, were treated by painters who had none of the true earnestness of faith, and in their delusion they followed Francesco Francia, Pietro Perugino, Angelico da Fiesole and others like them, rating them higher even than the really great masters who followed. It was in view of this error, and because in poetry an analogous aim had at the same time found favour, that Goethe wrote his parable *Pfaffenspiel*. This school, too, got the reputation of being whimsical, became bankrupt, and was followed by a return to nature, which proclaimed itself in *genre* pictures and scenes of life of every kind, even though it now and then strayed into what was vulgar.

The progress of the human mind in literature is similar. The history of literature is for the most part like the catalogue of a museum of deformities; the spirit in which they keep best is pigskin. The few creatures that have been born in goodly shape need not be looked for there. They are still alive, and are everywhere to be met with in the world, immortal, and with their years ever green. They alone form what I have called real literature; the history of which, poor as it is in persons, we learn from our youth up out of the mouths of all educated people, before compilations recount it for us.

As an antidote to the prevailing monomania for

reading literary histories, in order to be able to chatter about everything, without having any real knowledge at all, let me refer to a passage in Lichtenberg's works, (vol. II. p. 302), which is well worth perusal.

I believe that the over-minute acquaintance with the history of science and learning, which is such a prevalent feature of our day, is very prejudicial to the advance of knowledge itself. There is pleasure in following up this history; but, as a matter of fact, it leaves the mind, not empty indeed, but without any power of its own, just because it makes it so full. Whoever has felt the desire, not to fill up his mind, but to strengthen it, to develope his faculties and aptitudes, and generally, to enlarge his powers, will have found that there is nothing so weakening as intercourse with a so-called littérateur, on a matter of knowledge on which he has not thought at all, though he knows a thousand little facts appertaining to its history and literature. It is like reading a cookery-book when you are hungry. I believe that so-called literary history will never thrive amongst thoughtful people, who are conscious of their own worth and the worth of real knowledge. These people are more given to employing their own reason than to troubling themselves to know how others have employed theirs. The worst of it is that, as you will find, the more knowledge takes the direction of literary research, the less the power of promoting knowledge becomes;—the only thing that increases is pride in the possession of it. Such persons believe that they possess knowledge in a greater degree than those who really possess it. It is surely a well-founded remark, that knowledge never makes its possessor proud. Those alone let themselves be blown out with pride, who, incapable of extending knowledge in their own persons, occupy themselves with clearing up dark points in its history, or are able to recount what others have done. They are proud, because they consider this occupation, which is mostly of a mechanical nature, the practice of knowledge. I could illustrate what I mean by examples, but it would be an odious task.

Still, I wish some one would attempt a *tragical*

history of literature, giving the way in which the writers and artists, who form the proudest possession of the various nations which have given them birth, have been treated by them during their lives. Such a history would exhibit the ceaseless warfare, which what was good and genuine in all times and countries has had to wage with what was bad and perverse. It would tell of the martyrdom of almost all those who truly enlightened humanity, of almost all the great masters of every kind of art: it would show us how, with few exceptions, they were tormented to death, without recognition, without sympathy, without followers; how they lived in poverty and misery, whilst fame, honour, and riches, were the lot of the unworthy; how their fate was that of Esau, who, while he was hunting and getting venison for his father, was robbed of the blessing by Jacob, disguised in his brother's clothes; how, in spite of all, they were kept up by the love of their work, until at last the bitter fight of the teacher of humanity is over, until the immortal laurel is held out to him, and the hour strikes when it can be said:

> Der schwere Panzer wird zum Flügelkleide
> Kurz ist der Schmerz, unendlich ist die Freude.

ON PHYSIOGNOMY

PHYSIOGNOMY.

That the outer man is a picture of the inner, and the face an expression and revelation of the whole character, is a presumption likely enough in itself, and therefore a safe one to go by; evidenced as it is by the fact that people are always anxious to see anyone who has made himself famous by good or evil, or as the author of some extraordinary work; or if they cannot get a sight of him, to hear at any rate from others what he looks like. So people go to places where they may expect to see the person who interests them; the press, especially in England, endeavours to give a minute and striking description of his appearance; painters and engravers lose no time in putting him visibly before us; and finally photography, on that very account of such high value, affords the most complete satisfaction of our curiosity. It is also a fact that in private life everyone criticises the physiognomy of those he comes across, first of all secretly trying to discern their intellectual and moral character from their features. This would be a useless proceeding if, as some foolish people fancy, the exterior of a man is a matter of no account; if, as they think, the soul is one thing and the body another, and the body related to the soul merely as the coat to the man himself.

On the contrary, every human face is a hieroglyphic, and a hieroglyphic, too, which admits of being deciphered, the alphabet of which we carry about with us already perfected. As a matter of fact, the face of a man gives us fuller and more interesting information than his tongue; for his face is the compendium of all he will ever say, as it is the one record of all his thoughts and endeavours. And, moreover, the tongue tells the thought of one man only, whereas the face expresses a thought of nature itself: so that everyone is worth attentive observation, even though everyone may not be worth talking to. And if every individual is worth observation as a single thought of nature, how much more so is beauty, since it is a higher and more general conception of nature, is, in fact, her thought of a species. This is why beauty is so captivating: it is a fundamental thought of nature: whereas the individual is only a by-thought, a corollary.

In private, people always proceed upon the principle that a man is what he looks; and the principle is a right one, only the difficulty lies in its application. For though the art of applying the principle is partly innate and may be partly gained by experience, no one is a master of it, and even the most experienced is not infallible. But for all that, whatever Figaro may say, it is not the face which deceives; it is we who deceive ourselves in reading in it what is not there.

The deciphering of a face is certainly a great and difficult art, and the principles of it can never be learnt in the abstract. The first condition of success is to maintain a purely objective point of view, which

is no easy matter. For, as soon as the faintest trace of anything subjective is present, whether dislike or favour, or fear or hope, or even the thought of the impression we ourselves are making upon the object of our attention, the characters we are trying to decipher become confused and corrupt. The sound of a language is really appreciated only by one who does not understand it, and that because, in thinking of the signification of a word, we pay no regard to the sign itself. So, in the same way, a physiognomy is correctly gauged only by one to whom it is still strange, who has not grown accustomed to the face by constantly meeting and conversing with the man himself. It is, therefore, strictly speaking, only the first sight of a man which affords that purely objective view which is necessary for deciphering his features. An odour affects us only when we first come in contact with it, and the first glass of a wine is the one which gives us its true taste: in the same way, it is only at the first encounter that a face makes its full impression upon us. Consequently the first impression should be carefully attended to and noted, even written down if the subject of it is of personal importance, provided, of course, that one can trust one's own sense of physiognomy. Subsequent acquaintance and intercourse will obliterate the impression, but time will one day prove whether it is true.

Let us, however, not conceal from ourselves the fact that this first impression is for the most part extremely unedifying. How poor most faces are! With the exception of those that are beautiful, good-natured, or intellectual, that is to say, the very few

and far between, I believe a person of any fine feeling scarcely ever sees a new face without a sensation akin to a shock, for the reason that it presents a new and surprising combination of unedifying elements. To tell the truth, it is, as a rule, a sorry sight. There are some people whose faces bear the stamp of such artless vulgarity and baseness of character, such an animal limitation of intelligence, that one wonders how they can appear in public with such a countenance, instead of wearing a mask. There are faces, indeed, the very sight of which produces a feeling of pollution. One cannot therefore take it amiss of people, whose privileged position admits of it, if they manage to live in retirement and completely free from the painful sensation of "seeing new faces." The metaphysical explanation of this circumstance rests upon the consideration that the individuality of a man is precisely that by the very existence of which he should be reclaimed and corrected. If, on the other hand, a psychological explanation is satisfactory, let any one ask himself what kind of physiognomy he may expect in those who have all their life long, except on the rarest occasions, harboured nothing but petty, base and miserable thoughts, and vulgar, selfish, envious, wicked and malicious desires. Every one of these thoughts and desires has set its mark upon the face during the time it lasted, and by constant repetition, all these marks have in course of time become furrows and blotches, so to speak. Consequently, most people's appearance is such as to produce a shock at first sight; and it is only gradually that one gets accustomed to it, that is to say, becomes so deadened

to the impression that it has no more effect on one.

And that the prevailing facial expression is the result of a long process of innumerable, fleeting and characteristic contractions of the features is just the reason why intellectual countenances are of gradual formation. It is indeed only in old age that intellectual men attain their sublime expression, whilst portraits of them in their youth show only the first traces of it. But on the other hand, what I have just said about the shock which the first sight of a face generally produces is in keeping with the remark that it is only at that first sight that it makes its true and full impression. For to get a purely objective and uncorrupted impression of it, we must stand in no kind of relation to the person; if possible, we must not yet have spoken with him. For every conversation places us to some extent upon a friendly footing, establishes a certain *rapport*, a mutual subjective relation, which is at once unfavourable to an objective point of view. And as everyone's endeavour is to win esteem or friendship for himself, the man who is under observation will at once employ all those arts of dissimulation in which he is already versed, and corrupt us with his airs, hypocrisies and flatteries; so that what the first look clearly showed will soon be seen by us no more.

This fact is at the bottom of the saying that "most people gain by further acquaintance;" it ought, however, to run, "delude us by it." It is only when, later on, the bad qualities manifest themselves that our first judgment as a rule receives its justification and

makes good its scornful verdict. It may be that "a further acquaintance" is an unfriendly one, and if that is so, we do not find in this case either that people gain by it. Another reason why people apparently gain on a nearer acquaintance is that the man whose first aspect warns us from him, as soon as we converse with him, no longer shows his own being and character, but also his education; that is, not only what he really is by nature, but also what he has appropriated to himself out of the common wealth of mankind. Three-fourths of what he says belongs not to him, but to the sources from which he obtained it; so that we are often surprised to hear a minotaur speak so humanly. If we make a still closer acquaintance, the animal nature, of which his face gave promise, will manifest itself "in all its splendour." If one is gifted with an acute sense for physiognomy, one should take special note of those verdicts which preceded a closer acquaintance and were therefore genuine. For the face of a man is the exact expression of what he is; and if he deceives us, that is our fault, not his. What a man says, on the other hand, is what he thinks, more often what he has learned, or it may be even, what he pretends to think. And besides this, when we talk to him, or even hear him talking to others, we pay no attention to his physiognomy proper. It is the underlying substance, the fundamental *datum*, and we disregard it; what interests us is its pathognomy, its play of feature during conversation. This, however, is so arranged as to turn the good side upwards.

When Socrates said to a young man who was in-

troduced to him to have his capabilities tested, "Talk in order that I may see you," if indeed by "seeing" he did not simply mean "hearing," he was right, so far as it is only in conversation that the features and especially the eyes become animated, and the intellectual resources and capacities set their mark upon the countenance. This puts us in a position to form a provisional notion of the degree and capacity of intelligence; which was in that case Socrates' aim. But in this connection it is to be observed, firstly, that the rule does not apply to moral qualities, which lie deeper; and in the second place, that what from an objective point of view we gain by the clearer development of the countenance in conversation, we lose from a subjective standpoint on account of the personal relation into which the speaker at once enters in regard to us, and which produces a slight fascination, so that, as explained above, we are not left impartial observers. Consequently from the last point of view we might say with greater accuracy, "Do not speak in order that I may see you."

For to get a pure and fundamental conception of a man's physiognomy, we must observe him when he is alone and left to himself. Society of any kind and conversation throw a reflection upon him which is not his own, generally to his advantage; as he is thereby placed in a state of action and re-action which sets him off. But alone and left to himself, plunged in the depths of his own thoughts and sensations, he is wholly himself, and a penetrating eye for physiognomy can at one glance take a general view of his entire character. For his face, looked at by and in itself, ex-

presses the keynote of all his thoughts and endeavours, the *arrêt irrevocable,* the irrevocable decree of his destiny, the consciousness of which only comes to him when he is alone.

The study of physiognomy is one of the chief means of a knowledge of mankind, because the cast of a man's face is the only sphere in which his arts of dissimulation are of no avail, since these arts extend only to that play of feature which is akin to mimicry. And that is why I recommend such a study to be undertaken when the subject of it is alone and given up to his own thoughts, and before he is spoken to: and this partly for the reason that it is only in such a condition that inspection of the physiognomy pure and simple is possible, because conversation at once lets in a pathognomical element, in which a man can apply the arts of dissimulation which he has learned: partly again because personal contact, even of the very slightest kind, gives a certain bias and so corrupts the judgment of the observer.

And in regard to the study of physiognomy in general, it is further to be observed that intellectual capacity is much easier of discernment than moral character. The former naturally takes a much more outward direction, and expresses itself not only in the face and the play of feature, but also in the gait, down even to the very slightest movement. One could perhaps discriminate from behind between a blockhead, a fool and a man of genius. The blockhead would be discerned by the torpidity and sluggishness of all his movements: folly sets its mark upon every gesture, and so does intellect and a studious nature. Hence

that remark of La Bruyère that there is nothing so slight, so simple or imperceptible but that our way of doing it enters in and betrays us: a fool neither comes nor goes, nor sits down, nor gets up, nor holds his tongue, nor moves about in the same way as an intelligent man. (And this is, be it observed by way of parenthesis, the explanation of that sure and certain instinct which, according to Helvetius, ordinary folk possess of discerning people of genius, and of getting out of their way.)

The chief reason for this is that, the larger and more developed the brain, and the thinner, in relation to it, the spine and nerves, the greater is the intellect; and not the intellect alone, but at the same time the mobility and pliancy of all the limbs; because the brain controls them more immediately and resolutely; so that everything hangs more upon a single thread, every movement of which gives a precise expression to its purpose. This is analogous to, nay, is immediately connected with the fact that the higher an animal stands in the scale of development, the easier it becomes to kill it by wounding a single spot. Take, for example, batrachia: they are slow, cumbrous and sluggish in their movements; they are unintelligent, and, at the same time, extremely tenacious of life; the reason of which is that with a very small brain, their spine and nerves are very thick. Now gait and movement of the arms are mainly functions of the brain; our limbs receive their motion and every little modification of it from the brain through the medium of the spine. This is why conscious movements fatigue us; the sensation of fatigue, like that of pain,

has its seat in the brain, not, as people commonly suppose, in the limbs themselves; hence motion induces sleep. On the other hand those motions which are not excited by the brain, that is, the unconscious movements of organic life, of the heart, of the lungs, etc., go on in their course without producing fatigue. And as thought equally with motion is a function of the brain, the character of the brain's activity is expressed equally in both, according to the constitution of the individual; stupid people move like lay-figures, while every joint of an intelligent man is eloquent. But gesture and movement are not nearly so good an index of intellectual qualities as the face, the shape and size of the brain, the contraction and movement of the features, and above all the eye,—from the small, dull, dead-looking eye of a pig up through all gradations to the irradiating, flashing eyes of a genius. The look of good sense and prudence, even of the best kind, differs from that of genius, in that the former bears the stamp of subjection to the will, while the latter is free from it. And therefore one can well believe the anecdote told by Squarzafichi in his life of Petrarch, and taken from Joseph Brivius, a contemporary of the poet, how once at the court of the Visconti, when Petrarch and other noblemen and gentlemen were present, Galeazzo Visconti told his son, who was then a mere boy (he was afterwards first Duke of Milan), to pick out the wisest of the company; how the boy looked at them all for a little, and then took Petrarch by the hand and led him up to his father, to the great admiration of all present. For so clearly does nature set the mark of her dignity

on the privileged among mankind that even a child can discern it. Therefore I should advise my sagacious countrymen, if ever again they wish to trumpet about for thirty years a very commonplace person as a great genius, not to choose for the purpose such a beerhouse-keeper physiognomy as was possessed by that philosopher, upon whose face nature had written, in her clearest characters, the familiar inscription, "commonplace person."

But what applies to intellectual capacity will not apply to moral qualities, to character. It is more difficult to discern its physiognomy, because, being of a metaphysical nature, it lies incomparably deeper. It is true that moral character is also connected with the constitution, with the organism, but not so immediately or in such direct connection with definite parts of its system as is intellectual capacity. Hence while everyone makes a show of his intelligence and endeavours to exhibit it at every opportunity, as something with which he is in general quite contented, few expose their moral qualities freely, and most people intentionally cover them up; and long practice makes the concealment perfect. In the meantime, as I explained above, wicked thoughts and worthless efforts gradually set their mark upon the face, especially the eyes. So that, judging by physiognomy, it is easy to warrant that a given man will never produce an immortal work; but not that he will never commit a great crime.

PSYCHOLOGICAL

OBSERVATIONS.

PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS.

For every animal, and more especially for man, a certain conformity and proportion between the will and the intellect is necessary for existing or making any progress in the world. The more precise and correct the proportion which nature establishes, the more easy, safe and agreeable will be the passage through the world. Still, if the right point is only approximately reached, it will be enough to ward off destruction. There are, then, certain limits within which the said proportion may vary, and yet preserve a correct standard of conformity. The normal standard is as follows. The object of the intellect is to light and lead the will on its path, and therefore, the greater the force, impetus and passion, which spurs on the will from within, the more complete and luminous must be the intellect which is attached to it, that the vehement strife of the will, the glow of passion, and the intensity of the emotions, may not lead man astray, or urge him on to ill considered, false or ruinous action; this will, inevitably, be the result, if the will is very violent and the intellect very weak. On the other hand, a phlegmatic character, a weak and languid will, can get on and hold its own with a small amount of intellect; what is naturally moderate needs only moderate support. The general

tendency of a want of proportion between the will and the intellect, in other words, of any variation from the normal proportion I have mentioned, is to produce unhappiness, whether it be that the will is greater than the intellect, or the intellect greater than the will. Especially is this the case when the intellect is developed to an abnormal degree of strength and superiority, so as to be out of all proportion to the will, a condition which is the essence of real genius; the intellect is then not only more than enough for the needs and aims of life, it is absolutely prejudicial to them. The result is that, in youth, excessive energy in grasping the objective world, accompanied by a vivid imagination and a total lack of experience, makes the mind susceptible, and an easy prey to extravagant ideas, nay, even to chimæras; and this issues in an eccentric and phantastic character. And when, in later years, this state of mind yields and passes away under the teaching of experience, still the genius never feels himself at home in the common world of every day and the ordinary business of life; he will never take his place in it, and accommodate himself to it as accurately as the person of normal intellect; he will be much more likely to make curious mistakes. For the ordinary mind feels itself so completely at home in the narrow circle of its ideas and views of the world that no one can get the better of it in that sphere; its faculties remain true to their original purpose, viz., to promote the service of the will; it devotes itself steadfastly to this end, and abjures extravagant aims. The genius, on the other hand, is at bottom a *monstrum per excessum*; just as,

conversely, the passionate, violent and unintelligent man, the brainless barbarian, is a *monstrum per defectum.*

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The will to live, which forms the inmost core of every living being, exhibits itself most conspicuously in the higher order of animals, that is, the cleverer ones; and so in them the nature of the will may be seen and examined most clearly. For in the lower orders its activity is not so evident; it has a lower degree of objectivation; whereas, in the class which stands above the higher order of animals, that is, in men, reason enters in; and with reason comes discretion, and with discretion, the capacity for dissimulation, which throws a veil over the operations of the will. And in mankind, consequently, the will appears without its mask only in the affections and the passions. And this is the reason why passion, when it speaks, always wins credence, no matter what the passion may be; and rightly so. For the same reason the passions are the main theme of poets and the stalking horse of actors. The conspicuousness of the will in the lower order of animals explains the delight we take in dogs, apes, cats, etc.; it is the entirely naive way in which they express themselves that gives us so much pleasure.

The sight of any free animal going about its business undisturbed, seeking its food, or looking after its young, or mixing in the company of its kind, all the time being exactly what it ought to be and can be,—what a strange pleasure it gives us! Even if it is only a bird, I can watch it for a long time with de-

light; or a water rat or a hedgehog; or better still, a weasel, a deer, or a stag. The main reason why we take so much pleasure in looking at animals is that we like to see our own nature in such a simplified form. There is only one mendacious being in the world, and that is man. Every other is true and sincere, and makes no attempt to conceal what it is, expressing its feelings just as they are.

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Many things are put down to the force of habit which are rather to be attributed to the constancy and immutability of original, innate character, according to which under like circumstances we always do the same thing: whether it happens for the first or the hundredth time, it is in virtue of the same necessity. Real force of habit, as a matter of fact, rests upon that indolent, passive disposition which seeks to relieve the intellect and the will of a fresh choice, and so makes us do what we did yesterday and have done a hundred times before, and of which we know that it will attain its object.

But the truth of the matter lies deeper, and a more precise explanation of it can be given than appears at first sight. Bodies which may be moved by mechanical means only are subject to the power of inertia; and applied to bodies which may be acted on by motives, this power becomes the force of habit. The actions which we perform by mere habit come about, in fact, without any individual separate motive brought into play for the particular case: hence, in performing them, we really do not think about them. A motive was present only on the first few occasions on which the action

happened, which has since become a habit: the secondary after-effect of this motive is the present habit, and it is sufficient to enable the action to continue: just as when a body has been set in motion by a push, it requires no more pushing in order to continue its motion; it will go on to all eternity, if it meets with no friction. It is the same in the case of animals: training is a habit which is forced upon them. The horse goes on drawing his cart quite contentedly, without having to be urged on: the motion is the continued effect of those strokes of the whip which urged him on at first: by the law of inertia they have become perpetuated as habit. All this is really more than a mere parable: it is the underlying identity of the will at very different degrees of its objectivation, in virtue of which the same law of motion takes such different forms.

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Vive muchos años is the ordinary greeting in Spain, and all over the earth it is quite customary to wish people a long life. It is presumably not a knowledge of life which directs such a wish; it is rather knowledge of what man is in his inmost nature, *the will to live.*

The wish which everyone has that he may be remembered after his death,—a wish which rises to the longing for posthumous glory in the case of those whose aims are high,—seems to me to spring from this clinging to life. When the time comes which cuts a man off from every possibility of real existence, he strives after a life which is still attainable, even though it be a shadowy and ideal one.

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The deep grief we feel at the loss of a friend arises from the feeling that in every individual there is something which no words can express, something which is peculiarly his own and therefore irreparable. *Omne individuum ineffabile.*

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We may come to look upon the death of our enemies and adversaries, even long after it has occurred, with just as much regret as we feel for that of our friends, viz., when we miss them as witnesses of our brilliant success.

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That the sudden announcement of a very happy event may easily prove fatal rests upon the fact that happiness and misery depend merely on the proportion which our claims bear to what we get. Accordingly, the good things we possess, or are certain of getting, are not felt to be such; because all pleasure is in fact of a negative nature and effects the relief of pain, while pain or evil is what is really positive; it is the object of immediate sensation. With the possession or certain expectation of good things our demand rises, and increases our capacity for further possession and larger expectations. But if we are depressed by continual misfortune, and our claims reduced to a minimum, the sudden advent of happiness finds no capacity for enjoying it. Neutralised by an absence of pre-existing claims, its effects are apparently positive, and so its whole force is brought into play; hence it may possibly break our feelings, *i.e.*, be fatal to them. And so, as is well known, one must be careful in announcing great happiness. First, one must

get the person to hope for it, then open up the prospect of it, then communicate part of it, and at last make it fully known. Every portion of the good news loses its efficacy, because it is anticipated by a demand, and room is left for an increase in it. In view of all this, it may be said that our stomach for good fortune is bottomless, but the entrance to it is narrow. These remarks are not applicable to great misfortunes in the same way. They are more seldom fatal, because hope always sets itself against them. That an analogous part is not played by fear in the case of happiness results from the fact that we are instinctively more inclined to hope than to fear; just as our eyes turn of themselves towards light rather than darkness.

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Hope is the result of confusing the desire that something should take place with the probability that it will. Perhaps no man is free from this folly of the heart, which deranges the intellect's correct appreciation of probability to such an extent that, if the chances are a thousand to one against it, yet the event is thought a likely one. Still in spite of this, a sudden misfortune is like a death-stroke, whilst a hope that is always disappointed and still never dies, is like death by prolonged torture.

He who has lost all hope has also lost all fear; this is the meaning of the expression "desperate." It is natural to a man to believe what he wishes to be true, and to believe it because he wishes it. If this characteristic of our nature, at once beneficial and assuaging, is rooted out by many hard blows of fate,

and a man comes, conversely, to a condition in which he believes a thing must happen because he does not wish it, and what he wishes to happen can never be, just because he wishes it, this is in reality the state described as " desperation."

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That we are so often deceived in others is not because our judgment is at fault, but because in general, as Bacon says, *intellectus luminis sicci non est, sed recipit infusionem a voluntate et affectibus:* that is to say, trifles unconsciously bias us for or against a person from the very beginning. It may also be explained by our not abiding by the qualities which we really discover; we go on to conclude the presence of others which we think inseparable from them, or the absence of those which we consider incompatible. For instance, when we perceive generosity, we infer justice; from piety, we infer honesty; from lying, deception; from deception, stealing, etc; a procedure which opens the door to many false views, partly because human nature is so strange, partly because our stand-point is so one-sided. It is true, indeed, that character always forms a consistent and connected whole; but the roots of all its qualities lie too deep to allow of our concluding from particular data in a given case whether certain qualities can or cannot exist together.

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We often happen to say things that may in some way or other be prejudicial to us; but we keep silent about things that might make us look ridiculous;

because in this case effect follows very quickly on cause.

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The pain of an unfulfilled wish is small in comparison with that of repentance; for the one stands in the presence of the vast open future, whilst the other has the irrevocable past closed behind it.

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Geduld, patientia, patience, especially the Spanish *sufrimiento,* is strongly connected with the notion of *suffering.* It is therefore a passive state, just as the opposite is an active state of the mind, with which, when great, patience is incompatible. It is the innate virtue of phlegmatic, indolent, and spiritless people, as also of women. But that it is nevertheless so very useful and necessary is a sign that the world is very badly constituted.

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Money is human happiness in the abstract: he, then, who is no longer capable of enjoying human happiness in the concrete, devotes his heart entirely to money.

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Obstinacy is the result of the will forcing itself into the place of the inte lect.

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If you want to find out your real opinion of anyone, observe the impression made upon you by the first sight of a letter from him.

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The course of our individual life and the events in it, as far as their true meaning and connection is

concerned, may be compared to a piece of rough mosaic. So long as you stand close in front of it, you cannot get a right view of the objects presented, nor perceive their significance or beauty. Both come in sight only when you stand a little way off. And in the same way you often understand the true connection of important events in your life not while they are going on nor soon after they are past, but only a considerable time afterwards.

Is this so, because we require the magnifying effect of imagination? or because we can get a general view only from a distance? or because the school of experience makes our judgment ripe? Perhaps all of these together: but it is certain that we often view in the right light the actions of others, and occasionally even our own, only after the lapse of years. And as it is in one's own life, so it is in history.

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Happy circumstances in life are like certain groups of trees. Seen from a distance they look very well: but go up to them and amongst them, and the beauty vanishes; you don't know where it can be; it is only trees you see. And so it is that we often envy the lot of others.

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The doctor sees all the weakness of mankind, the lawyer all the wickedness, the theologian all the stupidity.

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A person of phlegmatic disposition who is a blockhead, would, with a sanguine nature, be a fool.

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Now and then one learns something, but one forgets the whole day long.

Moreover our memory is like a sieve, the holes of which in time get larger and larger: the older we get, the quicker anything entrusted to it slips from the memory, whereas, what was fixed fast in it in early days is there still. The memory of an old man gets clearer and clearer, the further it goes back, and less clear the nearer it approaches the present time; so that his memory, like his eyes, becomes long-sighted.

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In the process of learning you may be apprehensive about bewildering and confusing the memory, but not about overloading it, in the strict sense of the word. The faculty for remembering is not diminished in proportion to what one has learnt, just as little as the number of moulds in which you cast sand, lessens its capacity for being cast in new moulds. In this sense the memory is bottomless. And yet the greater and more various anyone's knowledge, the longer he takes to find out anything that may suddenly be asked him; because he is like a shopkeeper who has to get the article wanted from a large and multifarious store; or, more strictly speaking, because out of many possible trains of thought he has to recall exactly that one which, as a result of previous training, leads to the matter in question. For the memory is not a repository of things you wish to preserve, but a mere dexterity of the intellectual powers; hence the mind always contains its sum of knowledge only potentially, never actually.

It sometimes happens that my memory will not

reproduce some word in a foreign language, or a name, or some artistic expression, although I know it very well. After I have bothered myself in vain about it for a longer or a shorter time, I give up thinking about it altogether. An hour or two afterwards, in rare cases even later still, sometimes only after four or five weeks, the word I was trying to recall occurs to me while I am thinking of something else, as suddenly as if some one had whispered it to me. After noticing this phenomenon with wonder for very many years, I have come to think that the probable explanation of it is as follows. After the troublesome and unsuccessful search, my will retains its craving to know the word, and so sets a watch for it in the intellect. Later on, in the course and play of thought, some word by chance occurs having the same initial letters or some other resemblance to the word which is sought; then the sentinel springs forward and supplies what is wanting to make up the word, seizes it, and suddenly brings it up in triumph, without my knowing where and how he got it; so it seems as if some one had whispered it to me. It is the same process as that adopted by a teacher towards a child who cannot repeat a word; the teacher just suggests the first letter of the word, or even the second too; then the child remembers it. In default of this process, you can end by going methodically through all the letters of the alphabet.

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In the ordinary man, injustice rouses a passionate desire for vengeance; and it has often been said that vengeance is sweet. How many sacrifices have been

made just to enjoy the feeling of vengeance, without any intention of causing an amount of injury equivalent to what one has suffered. The bitter death of the centaur Nessus was sweetened by the certainty that he had used his last moments to work out an extremely clever vengeance. Walter Scott expresses the same human inclination in language as true as it is strong: "Vengeance is the sweetest morsel to the mouth that ever was cooked in hell!" I shall now attempt a psychological explanation of it.

Suffering which falls to our lot in the course of nature, or by chance, or fate, does not, *ceteris paribus,* seem so painful as suffering which is inflicted on us by the arbitrary will of another. This is because we look upon nature and chance as the fundamental masters of the world; we see that the blow we received from them might just as well have fallen on another. In the case of suffering which springs from this source, we bewail the common lot of humanity rather than our own misfortune. But that it is the arbitrary will of another which inflicts the suffering, is a peculiarly bitter addition to the pain or injury it causes, viz., the consciousness that some one else is superior to us, whether by force or cunning, while we lie helpless. If amends are possible, amends heal the injury; but that bitter addition, "and it was you who did that to me," which is often more painful than the injury itself, is only to be neutralised by vengeance. By inflicting injury on the one who has injured us, whether we do it by force or cunning, is to show our superiority to him, and to annul the proof of his superiority to us. That gives our hearts the satis-

faction towards which it yearns. So where there is a great deal of pride or vanity, there also will there be a great desire of vengeance. But as the fulfilment of every wish brings with it more or less of a sense of disappointment, so it is with vengeance. The delight we hope to get from it is mostly embittered by compassion. Vengeance taken will often tear the heart and torment the conscience: the motive to it is no longer active, and what remains is the evidence of our malice.

THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM.

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When the Church says that, in the dogmas of religion, reason is totally incompetent and blind, and its use to be reprehended, it is in reality attesting the fact that these dogmas are allegorical in their nature, and are not to be judged by the standard which reason, taking all things *sensu proprio,* can alone apply. Now the absurdities of a dogma are just the mark and sign of what is allegorical and mythical in it. In the case under consideration, however, the absurdities spring from the fact that two such heterogeneous doctrines as those of the Old and New Testaments had to be combined. The great allegory was of gradual growth. Suggested by external and adventitious circumstances, it was developed by the interpretation put upon them, an interpretation in quiet touch with certain deep-lying truths only half realised. The allegory was finally completed by Augustine, who penetrated deepest into its meaning, and so was able to conceive it as a systematic whole and supply its defects. Hence the Augustinian doctrine, confirmed by Luther, is the complete form of Christianity; and the Protestants of to-day, who take Revelation *sensu proprio* and confine it to a single individual, are in error in looking upon the first beginnings of Christianity as its most perfect ex-

pression. But the bad thing about all religions is that, instead of being able to confess their allegorical nature, they have to conceal it; accordingly, they parade their doctrines in all seriousness as true *sensu proprio,* and as absurdities form an essential part of these doctrines, you have the great mischief of a continual fraud. And, what is worse, the day arrives when they are no longer true *sensu proprio,* and then there is an end of them; so that, in that respect, it would be better to admit their allegorical nature at once. But the difficulty is to teach the multitude that something can be both true and untrue at the same time. And as all religions are in a greater or less degree of this nature, we must recognise the fact that mankind cannot get on without a certain amount of absurdity, that absurdity is an element in its existence, and illusion indispensable; as indeed other aspects of life testify.

I have said that the combination of the Old Testament with the New gives rise to absurdities. Among the examples which illustrate what I mean, I may cite the Christian doctrine of Predestination and Grace, as formulated by Augustine and adopted from him by Luther; according to which one man is endowed with grace and another is not. Grace, then, comes to be a privilege received at birth and brought ready into the world; a privilege, too, in a matter second to none in importance. What is obnoxious and absurd in this doctrine may be traced to the idea contained in the Old Testament, that man is the creation of an external will, which called him into existence out of nothing. It is quite true that

genuine moral excellence is really innate; but the meaning of the Christian doctrine is expressed in another and more rational way by the theory of metempsychosis, common to Brahmans and Buddhists. According to this theory, the qualities which distinguish one man from another are received at birth, are brought, that is to say, from another world and a former life; these qualities are not an external gift of grace, but are the fruits of the acts committed in that other world. But Augustine's dogma of Predestination is connected with another dogma, namely, that the mass of humanity is corrupt and doomed to eternal damnation, that very few will be found righteous and attain salvation, and that only in consequence of the gift of grace, and because they are predestined to be saved; whilst the remainder will be overwhelmed by the perdition they have deserved, viz., eternal torment in hell. Taken in its ordinary meaning, the dogma is revolting, for it comes to this; it condemns a man, who may be, perhaps, scarcely twenty years of age, to expiate his errors, or even his unbelief, in everlasting torment; nay, more, it makes this almost universal damnation the natural effect of original sin, and therefore the necessary consequence of the Fall. This is a result which must have been foreseen by him who made mankind, and who, in the first place, made them not better than they are, and secondly, set a trap for them into which he must have known they would fall; for he made the whole world, and nothing is hidden from him. According to this doctrine, then, God created out of nothing a weak race prone to sin, in order to give them over to

endless torment. And, as a last characteristic, we are told that this God, who prescribes forbearance and forgiveness of every fault, exercises none himself, but does the exact opposite; for a punishment which comes at the end of all things, when the world is over and done with, cannot have for its object either to improve or deter, and is therefore pure vengeance. So that, on this view, the whole race is actually destined to eternal torture and damnation, and created expressly for this end, the only exception being those few persons who are rescued by election of grace, from what motive one does not know.

Putting these aside, it looks as if the Blessed Lord had created the world for the benefit of the devil! it would have been so much better not to have made it at all. So much, then, for a dogma taken *sensu proprio*. But look at it *sensu allegorico*, and the whole matter becomes capable of a satisfactory interpretation. What is absurd and revolting in this dogma is, in the main, as I said, the simple outcome of Jewish theism, with its "creation out of nothing," and the really foolish and paradoxical denial of the doctrine of metempsychosis which is involved in that idea, a doctrine which is natural, to a certain extent self-evident, and, with the exception of the Jews, accepted by nearly the whole human race at all times. To remove the enormous evil arising from Augustine's dogma, and to modify its revolting nature, Pope Gregory I., in the sixth century, very prudently matured the doctrine of *Purgatory*, the essence of which already existed in Origen, (cf. Bayle's article on Origen, note B.). The doctrine was regularly incor-

porated into the faith of the Church, so that the original view was much modified, and a certain substitute provided for the doctrine of metempsychosis; for both the one and the other admit a process of purification. To the same end, the doctrine of "the Restoration of all things" (ἀποκαταστάσις) was established, according to which, in the last act of the Human Comedy, the sinners one and all will be reinstated *in integrum*. It is only Protestants, with their obstinate belief in the Bible, who cannot be induced to give up eternal punishment in hell. If one were spiteful, one might say, "much good may it do them," but it is consoling to think that they really do not believe the doctrine; they leave it alone, thinking in their hearts, "It can't be so bad as all that."

The rigid and systematic character of his mind led Augustine, in his austere dogmatism and his resolute definition of doctrines only just indicated in the Bible and, as a matter of fact, resting on very vague grounds, to give hard outlines to these doctrines and to put a harsh construction on Christianity: the result of which is that his views offend us, and just as in his day Pelagianism arose to combat them, so now in our day Rationalism does the same. Take, for example, the case as he states it generally in the *De Civitate Dei*. Bk. xii. ch. 21. It comes to this: God creates a being out of nothing, forbids him some things, and enjoins others upon him; and because these commands are not obeyed, he tortures him to all eternity with every conceivable anguish; and for this purpose, binds soul and body inseparably together, so that, instead of the torment destroying this being by

splitting him up into his elements, and so setting him free, he may live to eternal pain. This poor creature, formed out of nothing! At least, he has a claim on his original nothing: he should be assured, as a matter of right, of this last retreat, which, in any case, cannot be a very evil one: it is what he has inherited. I, at any rate, cannot help sympathising with him. If you add to this Augustine's remaining doctrines, that all this does not depend on the man's own sins and omissions, but was already predestined to happen, one really is at a loss what to think. Our highly educated Rationalists say, to be sure, "It's all false, it's a mere bugbear; we're in a state of constant progress, step by step raising ourselves to ever greater perfection." Ah! what a pity we didn't begin sooner; we should already be there.

In the Christian system the devil is a personage of the greatest importance. God is described as absolutely good, wise and powerful; and unless he were counterbalanced by the devil, it would be impossible to see where the innumerable and measureless evils, which predominate in the world, come from, if there were no devil to account for them. And since the Rationalists have done away with the devil, the damage inflicted on the other side has gone on growing, and is becoming more and more palpable; as might have been foreseen, and was foreseen, by the orthodox. The fact is, you cannot take away one pillar from a building without endangering the rest of it. And this confirms the view, which has been established on other grounds, that Jehovah is a transformation of Ormuzd,

and Satan of the Ahriman who must be taken in connection with him. Ormuzd himself is a transformation of Indra.

Christianity has this peculiar disadvantage, that, unlike other religions, it is not a pure system of doctrine: its chief and essential feature is that it is a history, a series of events, a collection of facts, a statement of the actions and sufferings of individuals: it is this history which constitutes dogma, and belief in it is salvation. Other religions, Buddhism, for instance, have, it is true, historical appendages, the life, namely, of their founders: this, however, is not part and parcel of the dogma, but is taken along with it. For example, the Lalitavistara may be compared with the Gospel so far as it contains the life of Sākya-muni, the Buddha of the present period of the world's history: but this is something which is quite separate and different from the dogma, from the system itself: and for this reason; the lives of former Buddhas were quite other, and those of the future will be quite other, than the life of the Buddha of to-day. The dogma is by no means one with the career of its founder; it does not rest on individual persons or events; it is something universal and equally valid at all times. The Lalitavistara is not, then, a gospel in the Christian sense of the word; it is not the joyful message of an act of redemption; it is the career of him who has shown how each one may redeem himself. The historical constitution of Christianity makes the Chinese laugh at missionaries as story-tellers.

I may mention here another fundamental error of Christianity, an error which cannot be explained away, and the mischievous consequences of which are obvious every day: I mean the unnatural distinction Christianity makes between man and the animal world to which he really belongs. It sets up man as all-important, and looks upon animals as merely things. Brahmanism and Buddhism, on the other hand, true to the facts, recognise in a positive way that man is related generally to the whole of nature, and specially and principally to animal nature; and in their systems man is always represented, by the theory of metempsychosis and otherwise, as closely connected with the animal world. The important part played by animals all through Buddhism and Brahmanism, compared with the total disregard of them in Judaism and Christianity, puts an end to any question as to which system is nearer perfection, however much we in Europe may have become accustomed to the absurdity of the claim. Christianity contains, in fact, a great and essential imperfection in limiting its precepts to man, and in refusing rights to the entire animal world. As religion fails to protect animals against the rough, unfeeling and often more than bestial multitude, the duty falls to the police; and as the police are unequal to the task, societies for the protection of animals are now formed all over Europe and America. In the whole of uncircumcised Asia, such a procedure would be the most superfluous thing in the world, because animals are there sufficiently protected by religion, which even makes them objects of charity. How such charitable feelings bear

fruit may be seen, to take an example, in the great hospital for animals at Surat, whither Christians, Mohammedans and Jews can send their sick beasts, which, if cured, are very rightly not restored to their owners. In the same way, when a Brahman or Buddhist has a slice of good luck, a happy issue in any affair, instead of mumbling a *Te Deum*, he goes to the market-place and buys birds and opens their cages at the city gate; a thing which may be frequently seen in Astrachan, where the adherents of every religion meet together: and so on in a hundred similar ways. On the other hand, look at the revolting ruffianism with which our Christian public treats its animals; killing them for no object at all, and laughing over it, or mutilating or torturing them: even its horses, who form its most direct means of livelihood, are strained to the utmost in their old age, and the last strength worked out of their poor bones until they succumb at last under the whip. One might say with truth, Mankind are the devils of the earth, and the animals the souls they torment. But what can you expect from the masses, when there are men of education, zoologists even, who, instead of admitting what is so familiar to them, the essential identity of man and animal, are bigoted and stupid enough to offer a zealous opposition to their honest and rational colleagues, when they class man under the proper head as an animal, or demonstrate the resemblance between him and the chimpanzee or ourang-outang. It is a revolting thing that a writer who is so pious and Christian in his sentiments as Jung Stilling should use a simile like this, in his *Scenen aus dem Geister-*

reich. (Bk. II. sc. i., p. 15.) "Suddenly the skeleton shrivelled up into an indescribably hideous and dwarf-like form, just as when you bring a large spider into the focus of a burning glass, and watch the purulent blood hiss and bubble in the heat." This man of God then was guilty of such infamy! or looked on quietly when another was committing it! in either case it comes to the same thing here. So little harm did he think of it that he tells us of it in passing, and without a trace of emotion. Such are the effects of the first chapter of Genesis, and, in fact, of the whole of the Jewish conception of nature. The standard recognised by the Hindus and Buddhists is the Mahavakya (the great word),—"tat-twam-asi," (this is thyself), which may always be spoken of every animal, to keep us in mind of the identity of his inmost being with ours. Perfection of morality, indeed! Nonsense.

The fundamental characteristics of the Jewish religion are realism and optimism, views of the world which are closely allied; they form, in fact, the conditions of theism. For theism looks upon the material world as absolutely real, and regards life as a pleasant gift bestowed upon us. On the other hand, the fundamental characteristics of the Brahman and Buddhist religions are idealism and pessimism, which look upon the existence of the world as in the nature of a dream, and life as the result of our sins. In the doctrines of the Zendavesta, from which, as is well known, Judaism sprang, the pessimistic element is represented by Ahriman. In Judaism, Ahriman has

as Satan only a subordinate position; but, like Ahriman, he is the lord of snakes, scorpions, and vermin. But the Jewish system forthwith employs Satan to correct its fundamental error of optimism, and in the *Fall* introduces the element of pessimism, a doctrine demanded by the most obvious facts of the world. There is no truer idea in Judaism than this, although it transfers to the course of existence what must be represented as its foundation and antecedent.

The New Testament, on the other hand, must be in some way traceable to an Indian source: its ethical system, its ascetic view of morality, its pessimism, and its Avatar, are all thoroughly Indian. It is its morality which places it in a position of such emphatic and essential antagonism to the Old Testament, so that the story of the Fall is the only possible point of connection between the two. For when the Indian doctrine was imported into the land of promise, two very different things had to be combined: on the one hand the consciousness of the corruption and misery of the world, its need of deliverance and salvation through an Avatar, together with a morality based on self-denial and repentance; on the other hand the Jewish doctrine of Monotheism, with its corollary that "all things are very good," (πάντα κάλα λίαν.) And the task succeeded as far as it could, as far, that is, as it was possible to combine two such heterogeneous and antagonistic creeds.

As ivy clings for the support and stay it wants to a rough-hewn post, everywhere conforming to its irregularities and showing their outline, but at the same time covering them with life and grace, and

changing the former aspect into one that is pleasing to the eye; so the Christian faith, sprung from the wisdom of India, overspreads the old trunk of rude Judaism, a tree of alien growth; the original form must in part remain, but it suffers a complete change and becomes full of life and truth, so that it appears to be the same tree, but is really another.

Judaism had represented the Creator as separated from the world, which he produced out of nothing. Christianity identifies this Creator with the Saviour, and through him, with humanity: he stands as their representative; they are redeemed in him, just as they fell in Adam, and have lain ever since in the bonds of iniquity, corruption, suffering and death. Such is the view taken by Christianity in common with Buddhism: the world can no longer be looked at in the light of Jewish optimism, which found "all things very good:" nay, in the Christian scheme, the devil is named as its Prince or Ruler, (ὅ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου. John 12, 33). The world is no longer an end, but a means; and the realm of everlasting joy lies beyond it and the grave. Resignation in this world and direction of all our hopes to a better form the spirit of Christianity. The way to this end is opened by the Atonement, that is, the Redemption from this world and its ways And in the moral system, instead of the law of vengeance, there is the command to love your enemy; instead of the promise of innumerable posterity, the assurance of eternal life; instead of visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations, the Holy Spirit which overshadows all.

We see, then, that the doctrines of the Old Testament are rectified and their meaning changed by those of the New, so that, in the most important and essential matters, an agreement is brought about between them and the old religions of India. Everything which is true in Christianity may also be found in Brahmanism and Buddhism. But in Hinduism and Buddhism you will look in vain for any parallel to the Jewish doctrines of "a nothing quickened into life," or of "a world made in time," which cannot be humble enough in its thanks and praises to Jehovah for an ephemeral existence full of misery, anguish and need.

Whoever seriously thinks that superhuman beings have ever given our race information as to the aim of its existence and that of the world, is still in his childhood. There is no other revelation than the thoughts of the wise, even though these thoughts, liable to error as is the lot of everything human, are often clothed in strange allegories and myths under the name of religion. So far, then, it is a matter of indifference whether a man lives and dies in reliance on his own or another's thoughts; for it is never more than human thought, human opinion, which he trusts. Still, instead of trusting what their own minds tell them, men have as a rule a weakness for trusting others who pretend to supernatural sources of knowledge. And in view of the enormous intellectual inequality between man and man, it is easy to see that the thoughts of one mind might appear as in some sense a revelation to another.

THE FAILURE OF PHILOSOPHY:

A BRIEF DIALOGUE.

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A. PHILOSOPHY has hitherto been a failure. It could not, indeed, have been otherwise; because, instead of confining himself to the better understanding of the world as given in experience, the philosopher has aspired to pass at one bound beyond it, in the hope of discovering the last foundation of all existence and the eternal relations of things. Now these are matters which our intellect is quite incapable of grasping. Its power of comprehension never reaches beyond what philosophers call "finite things," or, as they sometimes say, "phenomena;" in short, just the fleeting shadows of this world, and the interests of the individual, the furtherance of his aims and the maintenance of his person. And since our intellect is thus immanent, our philosophy should be immanent too, and not soar to supramundane things, but be content with gaining a thorough grasp of the world of experience. It surely provides matter enough for such a study.

B. If that is so, intellect is a miserable present for Nature to give us. According to your view, the mind serves only to grasp the relations that constitute our wretched existence as individuals—relations which cease with the brief span of our temporal life;

and is utterly unsuited to face those problems which are alone worthy to interest a thinking being—what our existence really is, and what the world means as a whole; in short, how we are to solve the riddle of this dream of life. If all this is so, and our mind could never grasp these things even though they were explained to it, then I cannot see that it is worth my while to educate my mind, or to pay any attention to it at all; it is a thing unworthy of any respect.

A. My dear sir, if we wrangle with Nature, we are usually in the wrong. For Nature does nothing that is useless or in vain—*nihil facit frustra nec supervacaneum.* We are only temporal, finite, fleeting beings, creatures of a dream: and our existence passes away like a shadow. What do we want with an intellect to grasp things that are infinite, eternal, absolute? And how should such an intellect ever leave the consideration of these high matters to apply itself again to the small facts of our ephemeral life—the facts that are the only realities for us and our proper concern? How could it ever be of any use for them again? If Nature had bestowed this intellect upon us, the gift would not only have been an immense mistake and quite in vain; it would even have conflicted with the very aims that Nature has designed for us. For what good do we do, as Shakespeare says,

We fools of Nature,
So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls.[1]

If we had this perfect, this all embracing, meta-

[1] *Hamlet*, *I.*, Sc. 4.

physical insight, should we be capable of any physical insight at all, or of going about our proper business? Nay, it might plunge us for ever into a state of chill horror, like that of one who has seen a ghost.

B. But surely in all this you are making a notorious *petitio principii.* In saying that we are merely temporal, fleeting, finite beings, you beg the whole question. We are also infinite, eternal, and the original principle of Nature itself. Is it not then well worth our while to go on trying if we cannot fathom Nature after all—*ob nicht Natur zuletzt sich doch ergründe?*

A. Yes; but according to your own philosophy we are infinite and eternal only in a certain sense. We are infinite and eternal, not as phenomena, but as the original principle of Nature; not as individuals, but as the inmost essence of the world; not because we are subjects of knowledge, but merely as manifestations of the will to live. The qualities of which you speak are qualities that have to do with intelligence, not will. As intelligent beings we are individual and finite. Our intellect, then, is also of this character. The aim of our life, if I may use a metaphorical expression, is a practical, not a theoretical one; our actions, not our knowledge, appertain to eternity. The use of the intellect is to guide our actions, and at the same time to hold up the mirror to our will; and this is, in effect, what it does. If the intellect had more to do, it would very probably become unfit even for this. Think how a small superfluity of intellect is a bar to the career of the man endowed with it. Take the case of genius: while it may be an inward

blessing to its possessor, it may also make him very unhappy in his relations with the world.[1]

B. Good, that you reminded me of genius. To some extent it upsets the facts you are trying to vindicate. A genius is a man whose theoretical side enormously outweighs his practical. Even though he cannot grasp eternal relations, he can see a little deeper into the things of this world; *attamen est quodam prodire tenus.* It is quite true that this does render the intellect of genius less fit to grasp the finite things of earth; just as a telescope is a good thing, but not in a theatre. Here we seem to have reached a point where we agree, and we need not pursue the subject further.

[1] *Translator's Note.* This is a favourite remark of Schopenhauer's. Some account of his interesting theory of Genius touched upon at the conclusion of this dialogue may be found in the concluding section of another volume in the series, *The Art of Literature.*

THE
METAPHYSICS OF FINE ART.

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THE real problem in the philosophy of Art may be very simply stated thus: How is it possible to take pleasure in something that does not come into any relation with the will?

Let me put this more fully. It is commonly felt that pleasure and enjoyment in a thing can arise only when it comes into some relation with our will, or, as we prefer to say, when it serves some end which we have in view. If this were so, it would seem to be a contradiction to talk of pleasure which did not involve bringing the will into play. And yet it is quite obvious that we derive pleasure and enjoyment from the Beautiful as such, quite apart from any connection it may have with our personal aims, or, in other words, with our will.

This problem I have solved in the following way: By the *Beautiful* we mean the essential and original forms of animate and inanimate Nature—in Platonic language, the *Ideas;* and these can be apprehended only by their essential correlate, *a knowing subject free from will;* in other words, a pure intelligence without purpose or ends in view. Hence in the act of æsthetic perception the will has absolutely no place in consciousness. But it is the will alone which is the fount of all our sorrows and sufferings, and if it thus

vanishes from consciousness, the whole possibility of suffering is taken away. This it is that explains the feeling of pleasure which accompanies the perception of the Beautiful.

If it should be objected that to take away the possibility of suffering is also to take away the possibility of enjoyment, it should be remembered that, as I have often explained, happiness and satisfaction are *negative* in their nature; in other words, they are merely freedom from suffering; whilst pain is the positive element of existence. So that, when will vanishes from consciousness, there yet remains over the state of enjoyment; that is to say, the state in which there is a complete absence, not only of pain, but in this case, even of the very possibility of it.

To be freed from oneself is what is meant by becoming a pure intelligence. It consists in forgetfulness of one's own aims and complete absorption in the object of contemplation; so that all we are conscious of is this one object. And since this is a state of mind unattainable by most men, they are, as a rule, unfitted for an objective attitude towards the world; and it is just this that constitutes the artistic faculty.

To the will as it exists in the individual is superadded an intellectual faculty, which enables the will to become conscious of itself and of the objects about it. This intellectual faculty came into being in order to perform the service of the will. Now, let us suppose that the will sets the intellect at liberty for a while and grants it a full release from its service, so that the intellect may for the moment dismiss its concern for the will; in other words, abandon the

personal service which forms its only natural task, and, therefore, its regular occupation. If, at the same time that it is thus released, the intellect does not cease to be active and energetic, and use every endeavour to arrive at a clear apprehension of the world, it becomes completely objective; that is to say, it becomes a faithful mirror of the things about it.

It is only in this way, with a pure intelligence as *subject*, that the *object*, pure and simple, can come into existence. For this postulated relation between subject and object to arise at all, it is necessary that the intellectual faculty should not only be withdrawn from its original service and be left altogether to itself, but also that, when released, it should nevertheless preserve its whole energy of activity; in spite of the fact that the stimulus of this activity, the impulse of the will, is now absent.

Therein lies the difficulty, and this is just why the condition of mind necessary in artistic creation is so rare; because all our thoughts and endeavours, our powers of sight and hearing, are always naturally exerted, directly or indirectly, in the service of our numerous personal aims, great and small. It is the will that drives the intellect to the fulfilment of its function, and the intellect flags at once if the spur is withdrawn. Rendered active in this way, the intellect is perfectly sufficient for the needs of practical life, nay, even for the kind of knowledge required in professional business. For there the aim is to understand only the *relations* of things, not the *inner reality* peculiar to them; and this kind of knowledge proceeds by applying such principles of reasoning as

govern the relations in which things
one another.

But though in the *conception* of a w
intellect is all in all, in the *execution* of
aim is to communicate and represent w
conceived, the will may, nay, must l
again; just because there is an aim to b
Accordingly, in this sphere, the principle
which govern the relations of things ag
play. It is in conformity with these
the means used by Art are so contrived
artistic effects. Thus we find the pain
with the accuracy of his drawing and
tion of his colours, and the poet lookir
arrangement of his subject and then to
expression and the laws of metre.

In the selection of a theme, both po
plastic arts take some one individual p
and endeavour to present it as a separat
all its peculiarities, even down to the
hibited with the most accurate precision
the other hand, works by the treatme
ideas, everyone of them representing
individuals; and it proceeds to define a
the characteristics of these ideas, so as to
for all. A comparison between these
might lead one to suppose that Art is an
petty, nay, almost childish pursuit. B
of Art is such that with it one case hol
thousand; for by a careful and detailed p
a single individual person or thing, it aim
the *idea* of the genus to which that pe

belongs. Thus some one event or scene in the life of a man, described with complete truth—described, that is to say, so as to exhibit precisely all the individuals which go to make it what it is—gives us a clear and profound insight into the *idea* of humanity itself, as seen from this particular point of view. But, in spite of this difference of method between Science and Art, there is some similarity in their treatment of single facts. For just as the botanist picks a single flower from the boundless realm of the vegetable world, and then takes it to pieces in order to demonstrate, from the single specimen, the nature of the plant itself; so the poet chooses out of the endless turmoil of human life as it hurries incessantly on its way, some one scene, nay, often only some one mood, some one sensation, so that he may show us from it what is the life and character of man.

And thus it is that the greatest minds, Shakespeare and Goethe, Raphael and Rembrandt, do not think it unworthy of them to bring some quite ordinary person before us—not even one that is anything beyond the common—to delineate him with the greatest accuracy, in the endeavour to show him to us in the most minute particularity. For it is only when they are put before us in this way that we can apprehend individual and particular facts of life; and that is why I have defined poetry as the art of rousing the imagination by means of words.

If the reader wishes for a direct example of the advantage which intuitive knowledge—the primary and fundamental kind—has over abstract thought, as showing that Art reveals to us more than we can gain

from all the sciences, let him look at a beautiful human face, full of expressive emotion; and that too whether in nature itself or as presented to us by the mediation of Art. How much deeper is the insight gained into the essential character of man, nay, into nature in general, by this sight than by all the words and abstract expressions which may be used to describe it. When a beautiful face beams with laughter, it is as though a fine landscape were suddenly illuminated by a ray of light darting from the clouds. Therefore *ridete, puellæ, ridete!*

Let me here state the general reason why the idea, in the Platonic meaning of the word, may be more easily apprehended from a picture than from reality; in other language, why a picture makes a nearer approach to the idea. A work of art is some objective reality as it appears after it has passed through a subject. From this point of view, it may be said to bear the same relation to the mind as animal food, which is vegetable food already assimilated, bears to the body.

But there is another and deeper reason for the fact in question. The product of plastic and pictorial art does not present us, as reality does, with something that exists once only and then is gone for ever—the connection, I mean, between *this* particular *matter* and *this* particular *form*. It is this connection which is the essence of any concrete individuality, in the strict sense of the word. This kind of art shows us the *form* alone; and this, if it were given in its whole entirety, would be the *Idea*. The picture, therefore, leads us at once from the individual to the mere form;

and this separation of the form from the matter brings the form very much nearer the Idea. Now every artistic representation, whether painting or statue, is just such a separation; and hence this separation, this disjunction of the form from the matter. is part of the character of a work of æsthetic art, because it is just the aim of such art to bring us to the knowledge of the *Idea.*

It is, therefore, *essential* to a work of art that it should give the form alone without the matter; and, further, that it should do so without any possibility of mistake on the part of the spectator. This is really the reason why wax figures produce no æsthetic impression, and therefore are not, in the æsthetic sense, works of art at all; although, if they were well made, they produce an illusion a hundred times greater than the best picture or statue could effect; so that if deceptive imitation of reality were the object of art, they would have to take the first place. For a wax figure of a man appears to give not only the mere form but with it the matter as well, so that it produces the illusion that the man himself is standing before you. The true work of art should lead us from the individual fact, in other words, that which exists once only, and then is gone for ever, to the mere form or the *Idea*—in other words, that which always exists an infinite number of times in an infinite number of ways. Instead of doing this, the wax figure appears to present us with the individual himself—in other words, with that which exists once only, and then never again; and yet, at the same time, it fails to represent the life which gives such a fleeting

existence its value. This is why a wax figure is repulsive; it is stiff and stark, and reminds us of a corpse.

It might be thought that it is sculpture alone which gives form without matter; and that painting gives matter as well as form, by making colour serve to imitate matter and its composition. But this objection would imply that form is to be taken in a purely geometrical sense; and that is not what is here meant. Form must be taken in the philosophical sense of the word, as the opposite of matter; and therefore it includes colour, surface, texture; in short, quality, in whatever it may consist. It is quite true that sculpture alone gives form in the purely geometrical sense, exhibiting it on a matter which the eye can see to be foreign to the form, namely, marble; and in this way the form comes to stand by itself so as to strike the eye at once.

But painting does not give matter at all, and it gives only the mere appearance of the form, not in the geometrical, but in the philosophical, sense just described. Painting, I say, does not give even the form itself, but only the mere appearance of it—that is to say, merely its effect on one of our senses, the sense of sight; and that, too, only in so far as a particular act of vision is concerned. This is why a picture in oils does not really produce the illusion that the thing represented is actually before us, both in form and matter. The imitative truth of a picture is always subordinated to certain admitted conditions of this method of representation. Thus, by the unavoidable suppression of the parallax of our two eyes, a picture

always makes things appear in the way in which a one-eyed person would see them. Therefore painting, equally with sculpture, gives the form alone; for it presents nothing but the effect of the form—an effect confined to one of the senses only, namely, that of sight.

In connection with this subject it is to be observed that copper-plates and monochromes answer to a more noble and elevated taste than chromographs and water-colours; while the latter are preferred by persons of little culture. This is obviously due to the fact that pictures in black and white give the form alone, the form, as it were, in the abstract; and the apprehension of this is, as we know, intellectual, in other words, a matter of the intuitive understanding. Colour, on the other hand, is merely an affair of sense, nay more, of a particular arrangement in the organ of sight which depends upon the activity of the retina. In respect of the taste to which they appeal, coloured prints may be likened to rhymed, and copper-plates to blank, verse.[1] The union of beauty and grace in the human form is the clearest manifestation of the will on the topmost stage of its objectivation, and for that very reason the highest achievement of the plastic and pictorial arts. But still, everything that is natural is beautiful. If there are some animals of which we find a difficulty in believing this to be true, the reason of it is that we are unable to look at them in a purely objective light, so as to apprehend their *Idea*. We are prevented from doing so by some unavoidable association of thought, chiefly the result of some similarity

[1] Cf. *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Vol. II., p. 488.

which forces itself upon our notice; as, for instance, the similarity of the ape with man; so that instead of apprehending the idea of an ape, what we see is the caricature of a man. In the same way a toad appears to produce an effect upon us similar to that of dirt and slime, and yet this is not enough to explain the unbounded aversion, nay, the feeling of dread and horror, which comes over some people at the sight of this animal, as over others when they see a spider. The feeling appears to be deeper than any mere association can explain, and to be traceable to some mysterious fact of a metaphysical nature.

The inorganic world, so far as it does not consist of mere water, produces a very sad, nay, an oppressive effect upon the feelings, whenever it is presented to us quite by itself. Examples of what I mean are afforded by districts which offer to the eye nothing but a mass of bare crags; that long valley of rocks, for instance, without a trace of vegetation, near Toulon, on the way to Marseilles. The same effect is produced on a large scale, and in a much more striking degree, by the African desert. The melancholy impression which this kind of scenery makes is mainly due to the fact that masses of inorganic matter obey one law only, the law of gravity; and consequently everything is disposed in accordance with it.

Contrarily, the sight of vegetation produces a feeling of direct pleasure, and that too in a high degree; and the pleasure is greater in proportion as the vegetation is rich, various, luxuriant, and left to itself. The more immediate reason of this is that, in the case of vegetation, the law of gravity appears to be over-

come, as the vegetable world tends to move in a direction the exact contrary of that taken by gravity. This is, indeed, the direct way in which the phenomenon of life announces its presence, as a new and higher order of things. It is an order to which we ourselves belong: it is something akin to us and the element of our being. And so, at the sight of it, our heart is moved. That straight upward direction is the source of our pleasurable feeling. This is why a fine group of trees looks so much better if a few tall, tapering pines shoot out from the middle of it. On the other hand, a tree that has been cut down has lost all its effect upon us: and one that grows obliquely has not so much as one that stands straight up. A tree which bends over the earth with its branches obedient to the law of gravity, makes us melancholy; and we call it *the weeping willow.*

Water neutralises in a great measure the oppressive effect of its inorganic composition by its exceeding mobility, which gives it an appearance of life, and also by its constant interplay of light and shade. Besides, water is absolutely indispensable for the existence of life.

But above and beyond this, the pleasurable feeling which the sight of vegetable nature gives us, comes from that look of rest, peace and satisfaction which it wears; whilst the animal world is mostly presented to us in a state of unrest, pain, even of struggle. This explains why it is so easy for the sight of vegetation to put us into a state where we become a pure intelligence, freed from ourselves.

It is a very astonishing thing that vegetation, even

of the commonest and humblest kind, is no sooner withdrawn from the capricious influence of man than it straightway groups itself picturesquely and strikes the eye as beautiful. This is true of every little spot of earth that has been left wild and uncultivated, even though thistles, thorns and the commonest flowers of the field were all it bore. Where the ground is tilled—in cornfields, for instance, and kitchen-gardens, the æsthetic element in the vegetable world sinks to a minimum.

It has long been observed that everything constructed for the use of man, whether it is a building or only an utènsil, must, if it is to be beautiful, preserve a certain similarity with the works of Nature. But a mistake has been made in thinking that the similarity must directly strike the eye and have to do with the shape the thing takes; as, for instance, that pillars should represent trees or human limbs; that receptacles should be shaped like mussels or snail-shells, or the calyx of a flower, and that vegetable or animal forms should be met with everywhere in Art.

The similarity should be indirect; that is to say, it should lie not in the shape itself, but in its character. One shape may differ from another in actual appearance and yet be the same in character. Accordingly, buildings and utensils should not be imitated from Nature, but should be constructed in the spirit of Nature. This will show itself in a perfect adaptation of means to ends, so that the thing itself and every part of it may directly proclaim what its purpose is. This will be effected when that purpose is attained in the shortest way and in the simplest manner. It is just

this striking conformity to a certain end that stamps the products of Nature.

In Nature the will works from within outwards, after completely dominating its material. But in Art it works from without, by a process of intuition; it may be, by setting up the abstract idea of the purpose which the object of art is to serve; it then attains its end and delivers itself of its meaning by impressing it upon some alien material; that is to say, some material originally devoted to another form of will. Yet for all that, the character I have described as belonging to a product of Nature may be preserved. This is shown by the ancient style of architecture, where every part or member is precisely suited to the purpose it is immediately meant to serve—a purpose thus naïvely brought into view, and where there is a total absence of anything that does not serve some purpose.

To this is opposed that Gothic style, which owes its mysterious appearance just to the multitude of aimless ornaments and accessories it displays, where we are obliged to ascribe to them some purpose which we cannot discern; and again, that quite degenerate style of architecture which affects originality by playing, in all sorts of unnecessary and round about ways, with the means used for producing artistic effect, dallying capriciously with them, and at the same time misunderstanding their aim.

The same remark holds good of ancient vessels and utensils, the beauty of which is due to the fact that they so naïvely express their nature, and the purpose they were meant to serve; and so of all other receptacles

made by the ancients. You feel in looking at them that if Nature had produced vases, amphoræ, lamps, tables, stools, helmets, shields, armour and so on, they would be made in that style.

As regards the birth of a work of art in a man's mind, if he is only in a susceptible mood, almost any object that comes within his range of perception will begin to speak to him, in other words, will generate in him some lively, penetrating, original thought. So it is that a trivial event may become the seed of a great and glorious work. Jacob Böhme is said to have been enlightened upon some deep point of natural science by the sudden sight of a tin can.

In the end it all depends upon the power a man has in himself; and just as no food or medicine will bestow or take the place of vital energy, so no book or study can give a man a mind of his own.

THE END.

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